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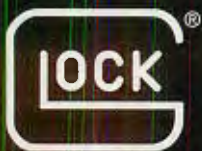


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Vol. 23 No. 11



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Mark H. Milstein

COMMAND GUIDANCE

By Commander Chip Beck, USNR (Ret.)

Think It Through This Time

Attacks against Bin Laden's terrorist network deserve questioning, not from a "Wag The Dog" scenario, but because the public is unprepared for horrors these actions may unleash.

The magnitude of the bio-chemical volcano waiting to erupt has been hidden for 18 years. The coming onslaught may cost resources, commitment, and losses far above what Americans expect or may tolerate. If Washington cannot justify stringent countermeasures, even the kind employed by the Israelis after Munich, or the Soviets in Beirut, then crucial mistakes were made in striking Afghanistan and Sudan.

Imagine any U.S. city, now potential targets, where 100,000 citizens, from garbage collectors to CEOs, in kindergartens and nursing homes, collapse without warning and begin drowning in their own bodily fluids as mucous pours from every orifice; or convulsing violently before their internal organs shut down in grotesque fits of agony.

Visualize a bomb exploding at an abortion clinic. Thirty minutes after curious crowds converge on the scene, 5,000 people lie dead downwind of the site, killed by nerve agents the device launched for the breeze to carry.

The public has heard of military Bio-Chemical Response Teams. It doesn't know their mission isn't to prevent terrorism, but to clean up the "debris" (dead) after the "event" (attack). If Washington embarked on the warpath after considering all the consequences, it left the public in the dark.

The United States, unable to eliminate world tensions, often reacts without the will to finish what it starts. Policies are feeble. Politicians miscalculate dangers. Adversaries are underestimated. Adequate goals are absent. From Vietnam to Desert Storm.

Clinton's lack of credibility aside, but U.S. intelligence has long held data connecting Bin Laden to the Saudi and World Trade Center attacks, as well as the new ones in Kenya and Tanzania.

Even so, Americans must understand our long-term objectives and the worst-case scenarios Washington knows can be inflicted by biological, chemical, and low-grade nuclear weapons. Voters must understand dire consequences now, not after disaster is inflicted.

Such data is routinely hidden to maintain public morale and promote the impression politicians are in control of the collective destiny. They are not.

Washington needs to clarify what resource and will-power limitations it will self-impose, as well as national tolerance levels for reprisals and loss of life. For once, I'd like to know at what point we will cave-in before the enemy knows.

Anything less than a full commitment to confront terrorism and win, invites disaster. U.S. missiles did not eliminate danger, but did create recruitment propaganda for new terrorists.

In the wake of Nairobi, is Washington willing to spend years tracking down terrorists for arrest or assassination, like the Israelis after Munich? Will we ever drop a family elder from a moving car, dead and castrated, in front of terrorist headquarters, like the Soviets did in Beirut to retrieve alive three of their four kidnapped diplomats?

It will take those kinds of actions and more to win, for the world is more dangerous than Americans realize. Hostile acts inside our borders have intensified since the Cold War. The latest actions just upped the ante.

Bin Laden issued a *fatwah*, a declaration of war, against America. If Washington is serious, congress must officially declare war in return against these transnational terrorists. Such legal action allows options, including assassination, which peacetime restrictions preclude.

Conflict, or inaction will be costly. We need to think our choices through — with all the information available to the public.

Beck is a retired CIA Special Operations Officer and former Station Chief. ✕

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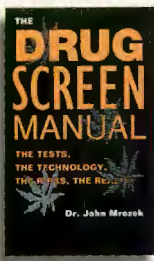
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THE DRUG SCREEN MANUAL

THE TESTS, THE TECHNOLOGY, THE RISKS, THE REALITY

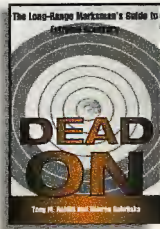
by Dr. John Mrozek

In recent years numerous employers, including all branches of the U.S. military, have jumped on the drug testing bandwagon in an effort to comply with the federal drug-free workplace mandate. However, although drug detection technologies have advanced rapidly, the technology has outpaced the knowledge base of the human beings tasked with employing it. As a result, inaccurate test results are far from uncommon. Increasingly, people have been wrongfully branded as drug abusers and denied employment – often without ever knowing why! This manual was written to inform and protect those required to submit to drug testing by presenting factual information on the types of tests used, the ways samples can be adulterated to produce false results, how test results are classified, the various drugs tested for (including athletic enhancement drugs) and what factors can skew results for each. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 64 pp. **\$15.00**



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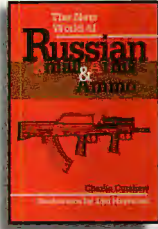
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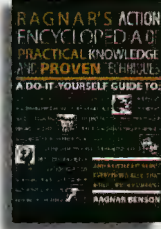
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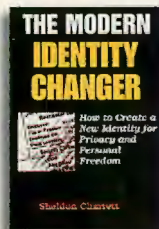
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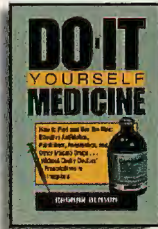
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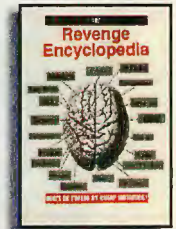
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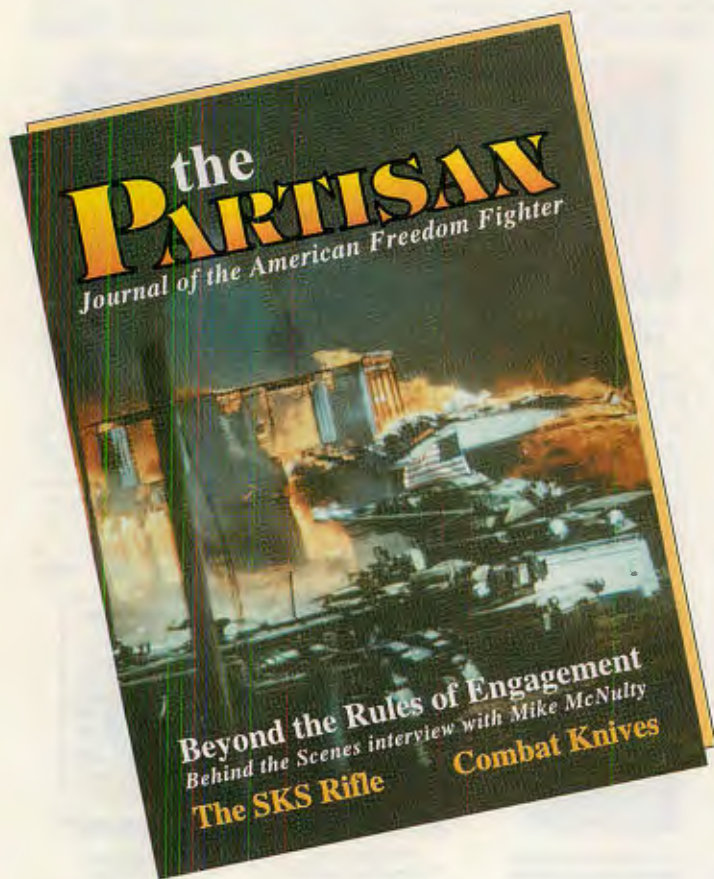
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Fasten your seat belt for a ride on the wild side of the First Amendment: *The Partisan* is here.

We recently had the privilege of reading an advance copy of the premier edition of *The Partisan*, and are pleased to report that not since Thos. Paine have we seen a rabble-rouser with the editorial rifle sights — or *cajones* — of Bob Glass, publisher and managing editor of *The Partisan*. If there were a flag for *The Partisan*, it would be a snake and the dictum “Don’t Even Think About Treading On Me!”

In each quarterly issue will be found articles on putting the Second Amendment to work for you, on preparing for worst-case scenarios that may be on the political horizon, exposés of government malfeasance that merit attention and action, and many pointed stories on how individual liberties are being trampled and how to do something about it. Lots of how-to.

Recommended. It’s Ayn Rand with an AK. We expect *The Partisan* to do well. It could probably make it on subscriptions from interested government agencies alone, but you’ll be glad you sent in your own subscription at only \$19.95, to *The Partisan*, Box 1085, Longmont., CO 80502; phone 303-651-0070; web site: www.partisan.com; and e-mail to uzi1@frii.com.

DoD Study Clears DU As GWS Cause

At the conclusion of an extensive study, the Department of Defense has concluded that although armor-piercing rounds and reinforced tank armor containing depleted uranium are a significant health hazard, there is no evidence that their use in the Gulf War played a role in causing Gulf War Syndrome. The DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs have, however, instituted a follow-up program to medically evaluate some 300 GIs who may have been exposed to DU in that conflict.

New NICS Reg In Effect This November

According to *American Firearms Industry* magazine, who received clarification from the FBI, manufacturers or gunsmiths returning a firearm after repairs do not have to do a NICS. Nor do shooting ranges who loan a firearm to a shooter who does not take it from the immediate area. Pawn shops, however, are required to do a NICS when returning a firearm redeemed from out of pawn.

NRA Fact Flacks

One of the reasons magazines have editorial “staffs” is that it usually helps to have more than one pair of hands work on a story to ensure the facts are straight and logically presented. This technique can help with letters to the editor, too. Sometimes, responding coolly and logically and making the right points — even when the facts are on your side — can be a challenge when some HCI or Administration boffin has gotten an editorial or “news” story published that is athwart the facts.

Good news: The NRA will work with you to create an effective, well-thought-out response, to explain the facts about our rights to keep and bear arms and of self-defense, and then provide you with a draft letter to send to the editor of the paper or magazine. The service is free: all you have to do is send the article to NRA Public Affairs, 11250 Waples Mill Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030-9400; fax: 703-299-9478. Be sure to include your own name, address, phone and fax, and the name of the publication in which the article appeared.

FBI On APG: “Case Closed”

The FBI’s foreign counterintelligence unit for the Baltimore region has announced closure of an investigation into allegations of illicit transfer of sensitive and/or classified computer data, by scientists at the Army Research Laboratory (ARL) at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, to Iraq and the People’s Republic of China.

“With regard to any allegations of intelligence information leaks (at Aberdeen), our investigation shows no loss of any classified data or any national defense information,” said Special Agent Pete Gulotta. “With regard to allegations of wrongful intelligence transfers, there was nothing founded. The case has been closed.”

Gulotta emphasized that if anyone came forward with any new leads into the allegation, the investigation might be reopened.

The FBI’s investigation was based on allegations by a former Army lab computer specialist who alleged that missile trajectory calculations run on ARL’s Cray II computer were passed on to Iraq through Dr. Gerald Bull (see “The Mother of All Cover-Ups” and “Spies, Lies and Computer Tapes” December ’97 and February ’98, respectively). It was also alleged, among other things, that a computerized nuclear blast performance code was leaked to the PRC.

—James L. Pate

Feds To Pay Goatherd’s Family

The U.S. Government has agreed to pay some \$1.9 million to the family of a Redford, Texas, teenager killed by a Marine on drug interdiction duty along the Texas-Mexico border last year.

Bill Weinacht, attorney for the family of 18-year-old Esequel Hernandez, Jr., announced the settlement with the Justice Department and Navy, which, in the form of an annuity, will amount to some \$1.9 million over several years. Justice

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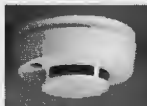
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Department spokesman Chris Watney said the settlement did not indicate an admission of fault on the part of the military.

Of course not.

In a related development, a Presidio County, Texas, grand jury declined to indict the U.S. Marine who shot and killed Hernandez. It was the third grand jury to look into the shooting death at the hands of Marine Corporal Clemente Banuelos.

Justice For [Almost] All ...

Is the name of the U.S. Department of Justice newsletter for DoJ employees. The lead item in the August issue was a boxed message from Janet Reno: "Taxes," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "are what we pay for a civilized society." I recall Justice Holmes' words after receiving a recent report from the Internal Revenue Service. It indicated that nearly 5% of Justice Department employees are delinquent in paying their Federal taxes, and collectively owe the government almost \$16 million. This is very troubling news.

Bright Idea

According to a report in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, an international agreement has come into force that effectively outlaws the use and transfer of laser weapon systems specifically designed to cause permanent blindness. According to Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, this is the first time a weapon has been banned before its use on the battlefield.

The United States and United Kingdom are expected to join the 27 countries who have ratified the new protocol, which is a modification of the U.N. Convention on Conventional Weapons which came into effect in 1983, and included Protocol IV which banned antipersonnel-blinding laser weapons.



Good news from Missouri! John Ross, bestselling author of the critically acclaimed novel of the gun culture, *Unintended Consequences*, is aiming for a second career. On 5 August, Ross won the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Congress in Missouri's Second District. In the midterm elections on 3 November, he faces incumbent Jim Talent. Talent, as you recall, cast the deciding vote for the 1994 crime bill, voted for HR 666 (the proposal to allow illegally obtained evidence to be introduced in criminal trials), and favors expansion of forfeiture laws. If you're in Missouri's Second District, vote for John — and in any case send his campaign a contribution at:

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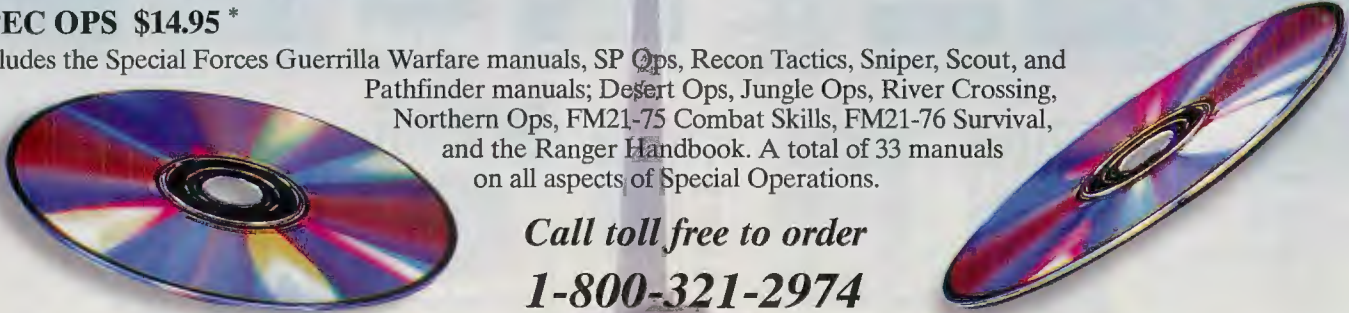
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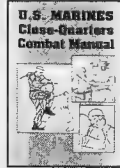
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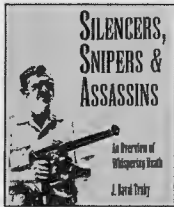
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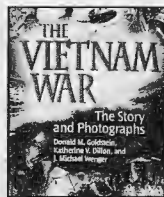
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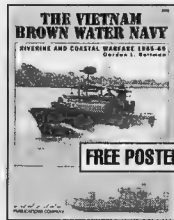
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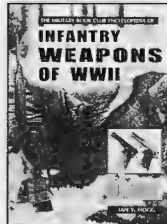
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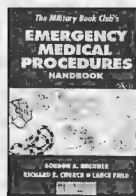
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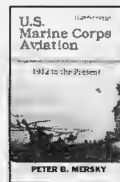
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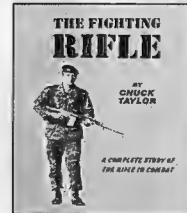
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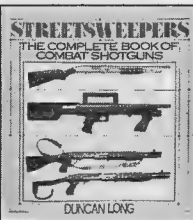
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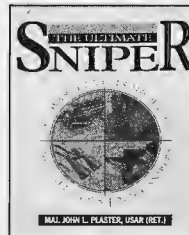
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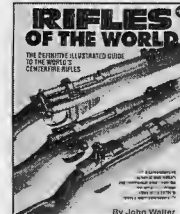
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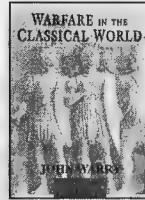
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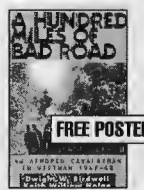
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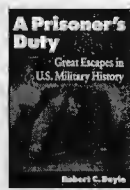
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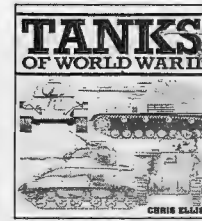
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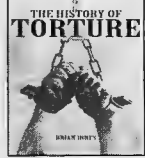
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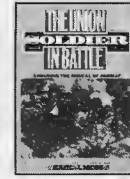
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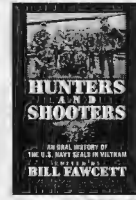
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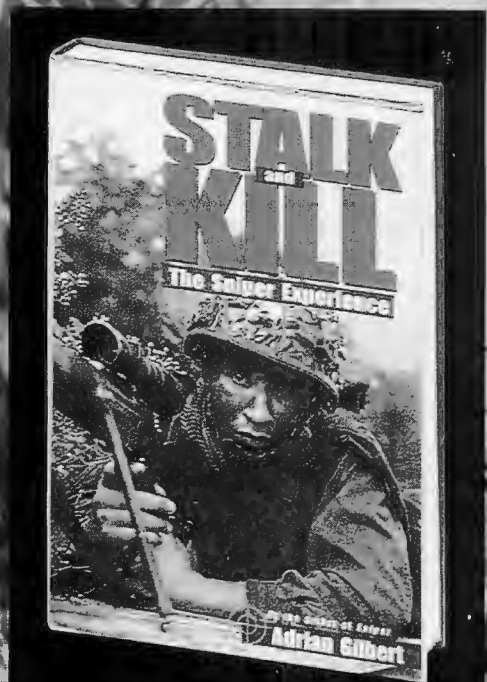


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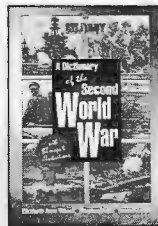
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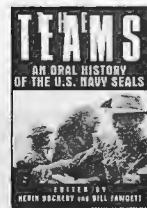
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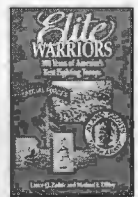
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A Cornish fisherman who caught a U.K. Royal Navy "PAP" remote-controlled mine-disposal system has it stashed at a secret location until the Royal Navy agrees on a substantial salvage fee. The mini-sub was lost last spring while searching for a sunken fishing boat.

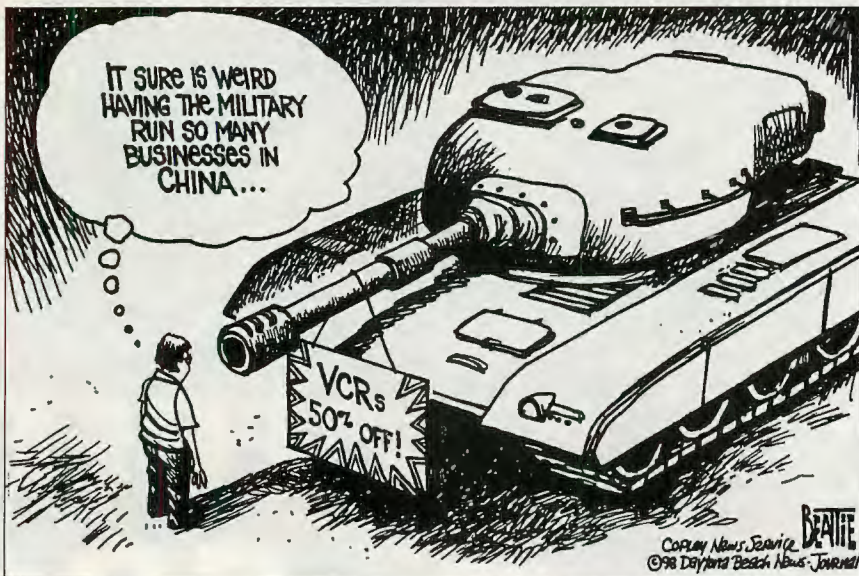
Bad Boyz In Uniform

Philippines: More than 2,400 soldiers and policemen have been implicated in crimes such as kidnapping, drug trafficking and

weapons smuggling during the last three years. According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, only 600 of these suspects have been removed from active service.

United Kingdom: Faced with a shortfall of some 15,000 recruits, in a controversial move the U.K. has lowered standard for recruits, allowing individuals with criminal convictions — less than three — to be considered for enlistment.

Russia: Media sources report mentally ill and HIV-infected have been drafted into military service. Chief military prosecutor for Moscow, General Mikhail Kisiltsyn, said that in the past two years 128 soldiers had been found to be HIV-positive, and that 111 of these entered the service in that condition.



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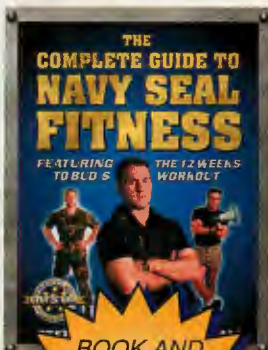
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FLAK



Tailwind Reading Disorder?

CNN's Fonda Gas interpretation of "Operation Tailwind" may be the result of a reading disorder. Producer April Oliver claims the genesis for this story came from John Plaster's *SOG: The Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam* (ISBN 0-684-81105-7, Simon & Schuster, 1997). The deeds described therein were so heroic and so far outside her Vietnam paradigm, that she immediately thought there must be some evildoing that was being covered up. Since SOG was a "black operation," albeit becoming well unveiled over the last three decades, Oliver was unwilling to trust any documentary evidence, all of which confirmed

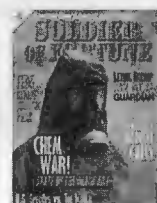
Plaster's version of Tailwind.

Instead, she relied on the "experience" of "Baghdad Pete" Arnett, who got a Pulitzer Prize in 1966 for being unable to distinguish between prohibited lethal gases and tear gas. Using another Arnett tactic perfected while reporting on Vietnam for AP — making up quotations — the dynamic duo did what was "necessary to destroy the truth, in order to save the TV show."

If they had had any interest in facts, they might have consulted Steve Sherman's *Who's Who From MACV SOG* (ISBN 0-962-40009-8, RADIX Press, 1996) an unclassified listing of some 6,700 people assigned to SOG. It's not nearly as readable as Plaster's book, but it has the ammunition to shoot down many wannabees wherever they lurk. It's expensive (\$75) and in short supply, but call 713-683-9076 to order. CNN didn't get it and

that's why CNN remains 99% Fact Free.

Name Withheld
Houston, Texas



Du-Uhh

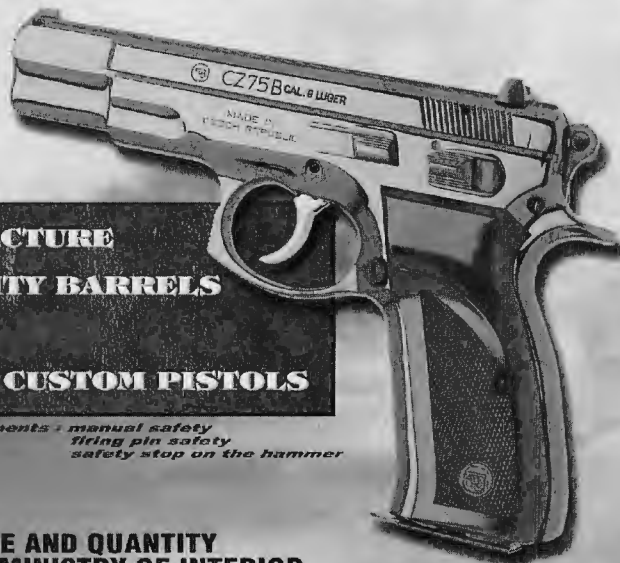
Re your September issue's piece on Arnett and Arnold's CNN story (1) on Sarin gas in Laos: I have had a chance to hear Arnett and Arnold respond at some length to fellow journalist's questions re the story, and it sounds plausible to me (2) even if they haven't got it totally straight yet.

In the first place, the op was a "black" op. Its point was to go in and take out most everybody as quietly as possible. (3) And what better medium for that than GB, or

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something like it, properly applied? (4) It's simple logistics, if nothing else. F-105s, and so forth, are real noisy and real visible. (5) Moreover, it's my bet that the "brass" would see another advantage to Sarin as well: It maintains distance between assassin and victim. (6) If there were enough defectors to be considered a serious threat, then chances are they had some reasons for being defectors. Reasons that the brass would prefer that the "grunts," even the "elite" ones, not be allowed to hear. (7) Ironically, you see, killing somebody one on one is an intimate thing. And the Sarin would block that.

Cordially,
Charles R. Hockett
Los Angeles, California

Your letter has more false premises and projects more erroneous conclusions from them than an Oliver Stone movie, so we took the liberty of inserting footnotes so we can respond. (1): Don't mean to quibble, but it wasn't a news story: It was an unexcusable fabrication.

(2): If any rationale they could have offered in defense of that slander seemed plausible, then the press was too ignorant to ask the right questions.

(3): The "point" [mission] was not to go in and take out anybody as quietly as possible, it was to create as much havoc as possible with a small force in a limited time, to cause the enemy to divert resources then

directed at hard-pressed friendly forces.

(4): What better? What have you been smoking? The absolute last choice for use among a homogeneous mix of unprotected friendly and hostile forces duking it out with small arms is Sarin — or any other — lethal gas. Even the gas masks that (some of) the SOG troops had would not have protected them against Sarin, and to use it would have been to kill everybody in the area: It would be like using hand grenades in a wrestling match. To drop tear gas, however, during the final extraction to hassle enemy heavy machine gunners who were shooting the hell out of rescue choppers makes good tactical sense: Optically sighted ordnance is a whole lot less effective when the gunner's eyes are full of tears.

(5): Hell yes, planes are very visible, and we dropped some half-million pounds of airborne ordnance from planes on this operation. Maybe you are confusing "secret" with stealth. The operation was "secret" because neither the NVA nor the Americans wanted to admit they were operating in Laos — but in no way was it intended to be quiet. We wanted the NVA to know we were there, to think that there were a lot more of us, so they'd divert lots of troops from the hard-pressed CIA forces. SOG forces just didn't want the NVA to know where they were as they were dramatically outnumbered: They had come to raise hell and make a lot of noise, not to launch a suicide infantry

assault on overwhelming forces.

(6) You're right in that if you are using lethal gas you don't want to be anywhere near — but in the Tailwind scenario, it was close infantry engagement — a piss-poor place to use gas.

(7): In the whole of the Vietnam War, there weren't enough defectors to be a threat in a bar fight, except for what intelligence value they might have to the enemy. Defectors and deserters were always worth policing up, and there were back-burner programs to that effect. But the premise we would launch an operation the size of Tailwind to capture deserters in the middle of a war is just ignorant. Anyone who defects obviously has a reason — cowardice first, then, possibly, strong philosophical reasons — but there obviously wasn't much reason to defect, or there would have been a significant number of American defections, which there never were. You gotta do some research before you listen to the fantazoids and their stupid theories based on inexcusable ignorance. The information is there for anyone interested in doing professional research. See "Heroes TIME Forgot" in this issue, for a brief recap of what Tailwind was really about.

Kudos And Carbines

Highest commendations to all for exposing the truth re the Tailwind "report." Second, the story on Keith Robinson in the

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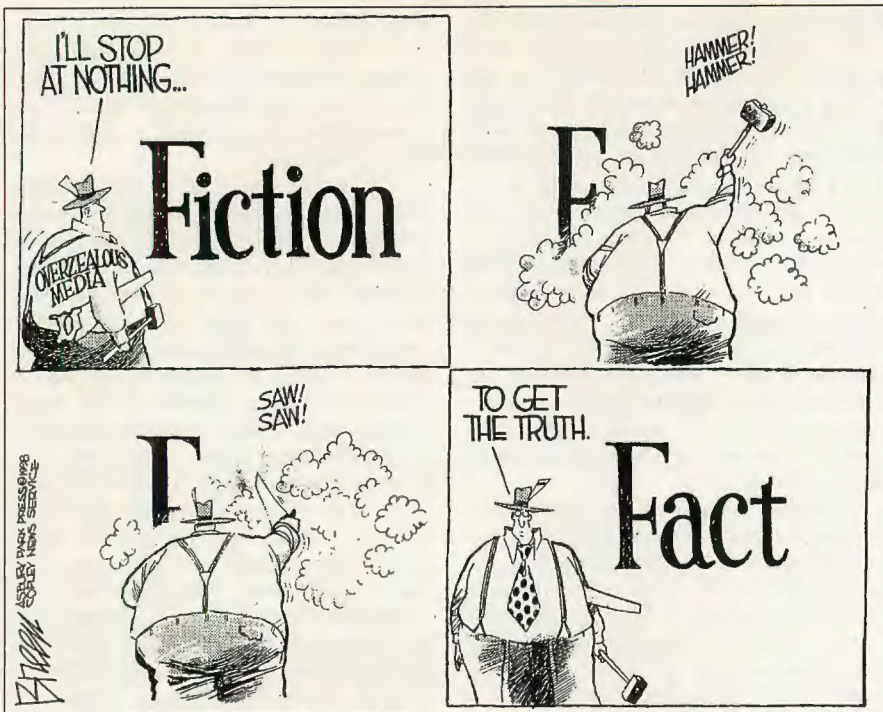
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September issue is inspirational, thank you for reminding some of that true patriotism manifests itself in ways we might not expect!

Last, I saw the photo of the FR-8 "7.62 NATO Denies Cover" in the same issue. Don't know why I didn't think of this before, but can you lead me toward a source of reference concerning this Mauser? I can't find any

information on it; what is the history, etc.?

R.P. Faust
via e-mail

Glad you liked the story on Keith Robinson. Men with principles and cajones are inspiring, aren't they, especially today?

Regarding the Spanish FR-8, stocks of Spanish M1893 and M1916 Mauser short rifles were converted to 7.62mm NATO chamber profile and given stock hardware similar to the CETME rifle, for issue to reserve forces and for training. The potential problem is that the M1893 action is nowhere near as robust as the M1898 Mauser pattern. This is not a problem for Spanish 7.62mm NATO chamber-profile weapons, as they download this round for use in the CETME rifle, as the Japanese did for their Type 64 rifle. However, running hot GI surplus 7.62mm NATO rounds through the weaker M1893-converted rifles is not a good idea.

Compassion, Consideration, Common Sense

It saddens me to see our great country destroyed from within. We are returning to the way we were governed 250 years ago. We thought we had rid ourselves of those tyrants, and maybe we did, but we didn't rid ourselves of that way of thinking. I, for one, am ashamed.

As long as we humans walk the earth, there will be irresponsible idiots. And as long as there are idiots, there will be the need for firearms for defense.

Responsibility comes from Mom and Dad, Church, the military, and plain old common sense — not from government. Laws cannot replace compassion, consid-

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Clayton Hufford
Rogers, Arkansas

Clayton, my friend, I think we sent the wrong Arkansan to the White House.

State Farm vs. Gunsmiths

Just passing the word around to interested parties about State Farm's advising me of the cancellation of my homeowner's policy due to the gunsmith business on the premises. For the record, I requested additional coverage from them in 1991 when I started my business and was advised by my agent there was nothing available along those lines. My last claim of any sort was in 1984 for a home burglary, so there is little cause for cancellation other than an apparent gun phobia. I am not aware of any statistical evidence of any excessive liability or claims due to gunsmithing. I operate out of a detached shop that is not even covered under the policy. I'll be glad to fax a copy of the cancellation notice and am available to provide further details if needed. It really PO's me considering my past premium payments and multiple policies, which will be canceled, by me, as soon as I obtain coverage from another company. Any recommendations?

Rick VanHouten

rvanhou@worldnet.att.net

Call Kirk Van Orsdel Company; 1-800-247-7989. They have handled NRA insurance programs and affairs for decades, and may have something that will fit your situation.

China Marine

I am a former "China Marine" with four years in the Corps. I can understand and identify with the man Keith Robinson you portrayed so well in the most recent issue of *SOF*. Any American who values freedom will be elated at the stance this man has taken against federal and state boondoggling into the private life of an honest, law-abiding citizen. He exhibits the kind of courage and determination that every American needs to think about. Thank you for promulgating his views on life. *Semper Fi* to him and to you. By the way, I still keep my powder dry and can shoot the gonads of a tsetse fly at 100 yards. No brag, just fact, man. Keep up the good work.

Hughes
via e-mail

20MM Hot Box

We have received many calls, letters, and rocks through the window from readers who tried to contact the 20MM Hot Box

company to get more information regarding, or order one of their fine BBQ/cooker/smoker units as described in last month's "Adventure Quartermaster." Mea Culpa! Here's the correct toll-free number to contact them: 888-226-7868.

We Be Mates

I'd like to thank America for her part in the Asia-Pacific arena fifty years ago. I realise that the only reason I have lived the 36 years of my life enjoying the freedoms of the modern world is because of the sacrifices of your young men and women of those tragic years. By rights I should be pulling a rickshaw up the main street for some Japanese master. Please don't assume all Australians don't care about your good works of the past when the occasional international friction occurs. America, you'll have to do a hell of a lot wrong before you put this man off-side. "Thanks" just isn't enough.

God Bless America,
Mark Davidson
Australia
Via e-mail

Well, yer welcome, mate! It's always been a pleasure to come to the aid of real friends. We noticed, also, that there were Aussies — but no Poms — fighting alongside us in S.E. Asia. ☒

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SLICK WILLIE WATCH

Abusing The Dead, For Fun and Profit

The feature you're reading, "Slick Willie Watch," used to be more fun. It was *Soldier Of Fortune's* opportunity to scrutinize a draft-dodging commander-in-chief. Despite our reservations about this man's character, he was at least a viable leader during the first term. "Slick Willie Watch" was like one of several small axes, chopping away at an oak — the office of the presidency — that would likely never fall but needed a good test.

Now it feels quite different. Compiling "Slick Willie Watch" is akin to kicking a month-old corpse. Your shoe just goes in and comes back with disgusting goo all over it.

However, at press time this corpse remains leader of the free world and commander-in-chief of all that makes us free. And someone has to clean up the mess. So with that in mind, we'll have at it like the hungry vultures our founding fathers intended the press to be.

It's Personal, Right?

No, it's not a personal matter. It's a matter of national security and decisions that will forever affect the human condition.

In Clinton's political turmoil, decisions are made every day that affect the welfare of every American man, woman and child. When decisions are made in a last ditch effort to salvage an unfixable presidency, they're not made in the best interest of Americans and their allies. Rather, they're made in the best interest of the survival of one man's career.

Clinton's sex problems put him in a similar position to a bus driver making decisions entirely to appease a back seat driver. They're not sound, logical or instinctive. They're not about driving. They're about shutting someone up.

So it should come as no surprise the Clinton administration secretly interfered with the United Nations inspection program in Iraq in August, pressuring the U.N. team in charge of determining the extent of Iraq's biological chemical weapons capabilities not to mount surprise inspections.

At this point in history, the last thing Clinton needs is trouble with Saddam Hussein, who has a strange and unpredictable effect on American polls.

Says the *Washington Post*, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright telephoned chief U.N. inspector Richard Butler and urged him to cancel plans to mount two "challenge inspections" at sites where



intelligence reports showed they would find evidence of the secret Iraqi weapons programs and efforts to hide them.

Says the *New York Post*, "the administration has conducted an abrupt reversal of U.S. policy — and has done so in secret. America's Iraq policy was formed in the wake of a war that involved 500,000 U.S. troops. In exchange for being allowed to remain in power, Saddam Hussein agreed to surrender some of his sovereignty to the United Nations."

The secret phone call was clearly a way for Clinton to ease up on Saddam, behind closed doors, while letting the American people and congress assume the administration is still an unconditional proponent of full access to Iraqi military sites.

In other words, with the Monica distraction, it's politically expedient for Clinton to get Saddam off his back. He just doesn't have time right now.

As a result, the administration will aid and abet Saddam in his goal to amass weapons of mass destruction surely intended for Americans and Israelis someday.

It's possible, although not likely, we're misjudging Clinton's motives here. But even so, the latest scandal involving Iraq shows why Clinton can't be an effective leader for his remaining two years. We simply can't trust him, and have every reason to suspect the worst, most selfish behavior. And we have every right to expect he's lying.

When it comes to a terrorist with Nukes — who lives to hate Americans — that dog don't hunt.

Sex, Lies and Armageddon

As the year 2000 looms, some computer geeks continue to warn of a global Millennium Meltdown that will far exceed the modest concerns of most Americans regarding the clock situation in computers.

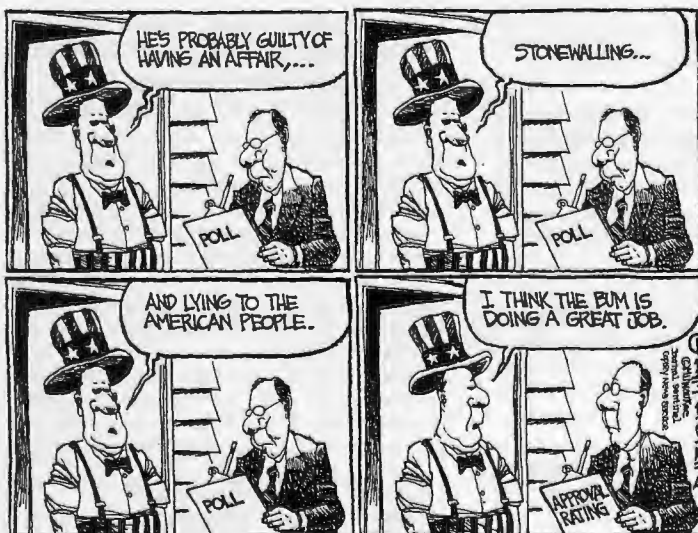
Average Americans expect cash register delays in a checkout line. Others expect Armageddon. Who knows?

What's known for certain is this: Clinton's perverted sex life, and his tireless efforts to stay in office, have surely cost precious time for those trying to solve the Y2K problem. While the world made Monica jokes after the president's pathetic post-grand jury speech, leaders working on Y2K weren't laughing.

A few got together in frustration, firing off the following letter to Clinton:

Mr. President:

As of this past Wednesday, 19 August 1998, the world had less



If You **BLOCK** In A Fight.....

You're Training In The "Ultimate Lie," Find Out How Over 30,000 Fighters Found The "Ultimate Truth"!!!

When I was ordered into combat I wanted nothing but the Truth!!! I wanted a fighting system that had no limitations. That's why I guarantee his system to be the Ultimate Truth!! I Came Home! Don't bet your life on the LIE of defensive sport-fighting, You'll need more for today's streets—

If you're reading this in a public area, look around, if you were to be jumped by some thug with a knife, club or gun would you know what to do? What if you're with your wife, girlfriend or child could you protect them? Not if you've been trained in the 'arts' or any other fighting system you read about in this magazine.

Yeah, I know you've had training and some of you have become very good at your chosen martial art, sport-fighting or even the half-assed streetfighting your uncle or buddy (the one who did 'time' in 'the joint') showed ya.

But guys, you're kidding yourself if you think that stuff will save your life in a real fight. You know, the type of heinous brawl you read about, where you get jumped unaware and "unprepared" by multiple scumbags with weapons.

Do you really think you can use all that 'grappling' garbage in a multi-fight with weapons? While you're trying to get one dirtbag to 'tap out,' his buddies are doing the "Rivardance" on your head, knees and balls. And why? Because

You Fight Like You Train

If you're training in any sport-fighting scenario use 'blocks' or defensive moves you are in **BIG** trouble if your life is on the line. Especially if your training doesn't seamlessly integrate weapons (knives, clubs and firearms). Why? Because all these systems you read about or train in now are not designed for life and death struggles. They are for sport or non-lethal purposes. Some may claim to be for lethal purposes but they are a joke. No one trains for this because no one can competently and quickly train you: **To kill your attacker (or attackers) who are trying to kill you.** If you are training for 'artistic' or physical conditioning purposes only, stop reading this article now! Only if you are interested in true fighting ability, attaining the true confidence to face any violent situation regardless of the threat if you want to learn the true meaning of...

"Ultimate Fighting"

Then you need to listen to this story. It's 1968, in country Vietnam an 18-year old US Army soldier is in a brutal fire fight. He turns in the middle of the battle to see 4 raging VC soldiers 20 feet away charging straight at him! He immediately attacks and they fall into a ditch. In less than 20 seconds one man emerged from under that pile of dead bodies, that man was Jerry Peterson, 173rd Airborne, 'Charlie' Company.

He spent 15 months in that highly decorated unit as point man. What he learned in that jungle war was, that if you hesitate or go defensive in combat you die! If he had tried to use his M-16 with those 4 VC he would have died because he knew he needed to kill them in close quarters with his hands if he was to survive.

This is true ultimate fighting gents, two guys preparing for months to enter into a ring with a referee, to make sure no one 'cheats' in a 'no holds barred' event, is a sport! Jerry's combat experience proved this and he spent the next 20 years researching all fighting arts and systems. (Looking for the science of human conflict.) During the war he had met some of the best Asian fighters in the world yet he was astonished to find not one 'Guru' or any martial art truly trained for lethal situations.

Back in the states he met most of the 'legends' of the

US martial arts community and not one man none taught true lethal fighting. Why? They simply didn't have the knowledge! Oh, they had some good moves and some correct movements in their techniques but none taught a complete system of fighting. That's when Jerry took his combat proven knowledge and created his 100% effective complete fighting system. This system, called SCARS® (Special Combat Aggressive Reactionary Systems) was closely held information until 1993. But I'm jumping ahead, lets go back to 1987 when SCARS was discovered by the US Navy SEALs. You might like to hear how SCARS became

The First Required Official Hand-to-Hand/Hand-to-Weapon System in US Navy SEAL Training

The Navy SEALs, have the reputation of being the toughest 'commandos' in the US Special Operations Community. In 1987, a special group was created at Naval Special Warfare Command (US Navy SEAL Headquarters) located in Coronado, CA. This groups mission was to standardize hand to hand/hand to weapon training for the worlds most elite commandos. They tested every martial art and 'combat' system for it's effectiveness in the true ultimate fight COMBAT. Every system or 'art' tested was rejected as being NOT combat capable. This includes but is not limited to: *Brazilian or Japanese jujitsu, JKD, TKD, Hapkido, KF, Muay-Thai along with a number of "wannabes" promoted in this magazine making claims they were some sort of official trainers of the SEALs.*

Then they met Jerry Peterson and saw the devastating power of the SCARS program. Jerry dealt with the SEAL, at their level and with his extensive combat record his credibility soared above any of the wannabes the SEALs had seen before. What really impressed the SEALs was that SCARS was created with...

100% Scientific Principles Which You Easily Learn and Instantly Gain An "Unfair Advantage"

In combat there is no room for error. If this system didn't work 'good men would die' and being a combat vet that was totally unacceptable to Jerry. As effective as SCARS proved to be, they were even more blown away by the Offensive Mindset Jerry trains in conjunction with SCARS. This mindset gives you the ability *to strike first even if your attacker moves first!* The combination of the mental and physical training in the SCARS Program resulted in the SEALs immediately funding the SCARS Project. Jerry created an instructor course that produced over 200+ combat SCARS Instructors. These SCARS certified SEAL instructors have taught SCARS to every type of Special Ops Unit: Green Berets, Air Force Para-Rescue, USMC Force RECON, even members of the ultra-elite DELTA and SEAL Team 6 counterterrorist units, the best of the best. These operators have seen every system imaginable and yet SCARS is the only system ever given credentials from the Dept. of Defense and issued course numbers. And lately, even some SEAL's, have hodgepogged some techniques together and tried to say their garbage is official training for the SEALs. Just ask any other system or instructor in this magazine if they have an official course number from CNET (The US Navy's

Credential Authority). You know what their answer is? NO!

So you're saying 'that's great for the SEALs but how is that going to help me?' Since 1993, over 30,000 fighters like you, have switched to SCARS. They like you, were dissatisfied with the effectiveness of what they learned in martial arts and sport-fighting. They like you, were uneasy on the violent streets of today's world and were searching for what was missing in their training. They wanted the secrets revealed to them about real fighting and SCARS delivered. And they learned....

Why You Must Know How To Kill With Your Hands

Most martial arts and sportfighters dance around the issue of lethal force. They try to explain you must be a 'defensive' fighter in this day and age with all the legal issues. They are horrified by anyone who would dare to open the curtain to expose the glaring lie they try to sell you that it is not important to train for a lethal (kill or be killed) situation. Yet, if you look at any 'art' or 'style' a knowledgeable person will see MANY potential LETHAL strikes, chokes, leverages, throws or kicks, yet it is never pointed out to the student.

Ask any lawyer whether you could say you didn't know that strike would kill the drunk who was hassling you in the bar? Wouldn't it be great to have the training and confidence to....

Be Able To Handle Any Violent Situation: "Lethal And Non-Lethal"

SCARS gives you the supreme ability to simply brush aside that annoying drunk at the bar yet be able to instantly take out that seemingly 'harmless' drunk when he suddenly pulls a knife. Guys, you never know when it is going to happen but the odds are you are going to face a life threatening conflict in your lifetime. Be prepared easily and quickly for your most nightmarish situation. I mean hopefully you'll never have to use this special information but think of the quiet confidence you'll possess having the SCARS arsenal at your disposal. That's why you must call and get your...

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Hey, we can't tell you everything in one page. Call for our free special report and get the **NEW** details from US Navy SEAL, SWAT Officers and other pro's about SCARS and more importantly from the over 30,000 guys just like you who made the switch to SCARS and can finally have the training and confidence to handle any violent situation. What do you have to lose? It's free, plus you can call **24 hrs a day** and hear our **FREE** recorded message. You owe it to yourself to get this free Special Report and decide for yourself if SCARS is really as good as the US Navy SEALs, Law Enforcement Professionals and over 30,000 former martial artists say it is? Can you really afford not to make this call **right now** and start becoming one of the few people on earth who possess this essential information.

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than 500 days to either correct its Year 2000 computing problems or prepare for a global Millennium Meltdown. Leaders in the struggle to increase public awareness of the 'Y2K' problem — what will happen when millions of computer systems and embedded microchips fail or malfunction as a result of the century date change — declared Wednesday to be 'Global Y2K Action Day' in hopes of attracting media attention to what may be the gravest problem of our time.

And did the media pay attention? Was 'Global Y2K Action Day' a headline in every major newspaper and a lead story for ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox and NBC? Was the full benefit delivered?

NO. And why not?

Because our myopic media was too busy covering and critiquing the latest performances in the three-ring circus you've orchestrated with your galpal Monica Lewinsky and attorney Kenneth Starr.

For many months now, the Y2K problem has not received the media 'shelf space' it deserves because your dirty laundry is there. ENOUGH. If you cannot get your house in order, please consider putting the interests of the nation first — for a change — and stepping aside.

We are trying to save the planet, sir, and your affairs are in the way.

No, say the polls, the president's "personal life" has little bearing on the nation's welfare. If the computer alarmists are right, it could, in fact, have everything to do with global meltdown.

About Those Polls

Throughout Clinton's slow political death, the polls have been absolutely bizarre. He had sex with her: approval rating high. He had sex with her and lied: approval rating high. He had sex with her and lied under oath: approval rating high. He had perverted sex with her, lied under oath, tampered with evidence and threatened American citizens: approval rating high.

What's next? He committed first-degree murder, lied, was caught and apologized for all of the above: approval rating high.

If nothing else, the Clinton scandal has fully discredited presidential polling. Fact is, people lie to pollsters more than ever now that the president's made lying *en vogue*.

And here's the motive for the lies: After months of media conditioning, Americans have been led to believe they are unsophisticated rubes if they care about morality in the Oval Office. In Europe, we're told, the cosmopolitan elite accept and expect this from leaders. So when the pollster calls, Joe Six Pack tells a quick lie and gets on with his life.

Never was this more apparent than when pollsters told us some 80 percent of Americans would have refused to watch had Clinton's grand jury testimony been televised. In truth, it quite likely would have been the largest TV audience in history. Everyone knows that, and most people lied. ❧

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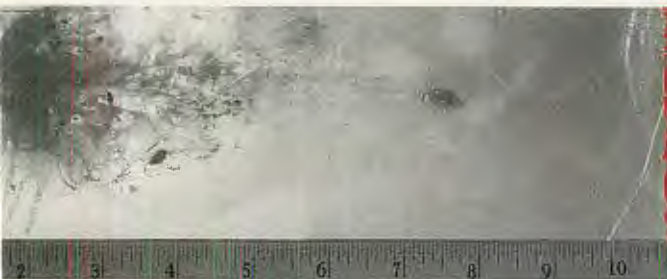


only on your command. Securely held, cartridges will not eject even if the speedloader is dropped. Removable rubber covers are available as an option, as are anodized colored finishes. Seats and springs are replaceable for a lifetime of service.

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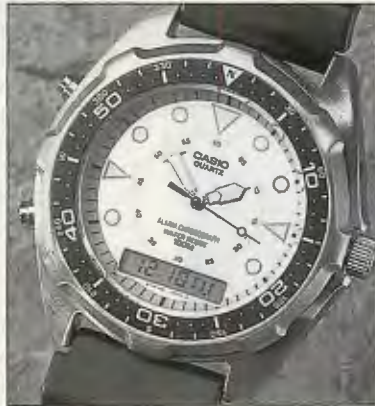
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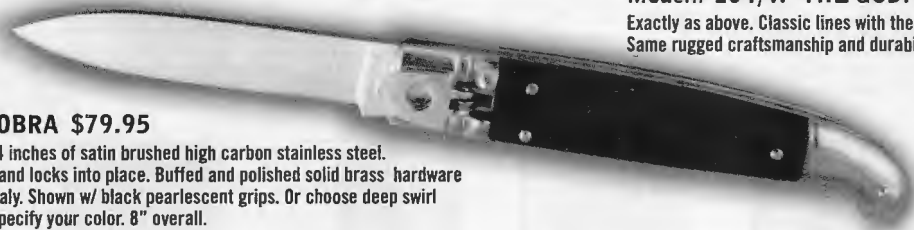


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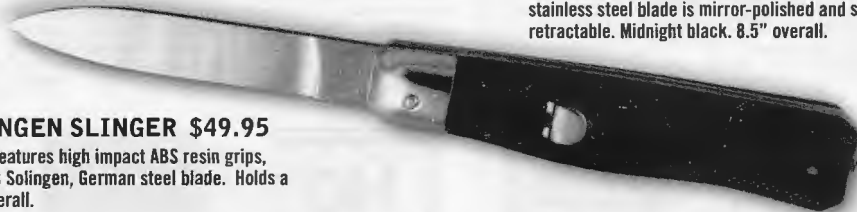


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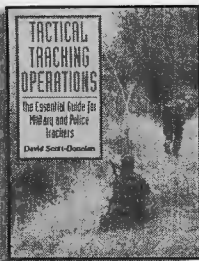
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The Essential Guide for Military and Police Trackers

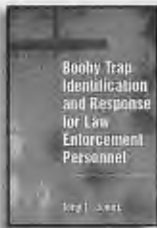
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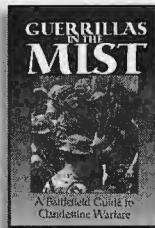
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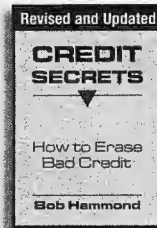
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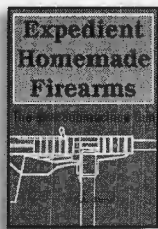
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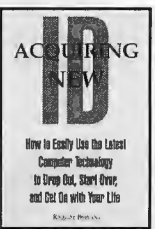
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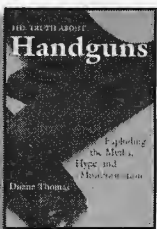
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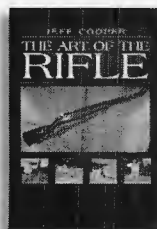
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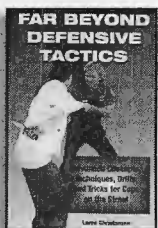
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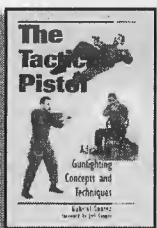
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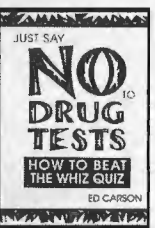
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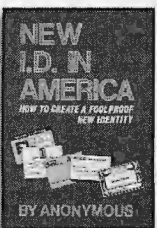
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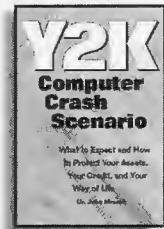
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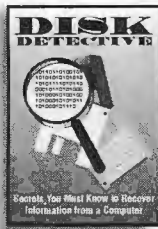
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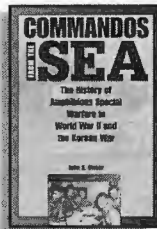
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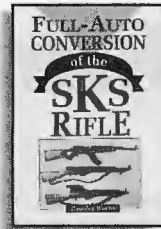
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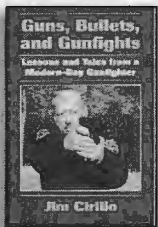
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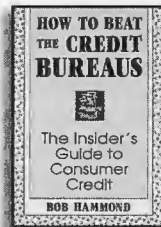
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Gun Running Made Easy

Proficiency with a firearm is not a solution by itself to the problem of unpleasant encounters of the violent kind, anymore than passing a driver's ed course makes you a motocross driver. You must develop and maintain mental and physical capabilities in order to recognize potential problems and be able to react to them. Violent encounters are always strenuous, and you are not always free to shoot your opponent. Unless you have a reasonable perception that this threat is rising to a level that could result in serious bodily injury or death, you are generally not allowed to employ deadly force — ventilating him with your trusty *pistola*. Even then, opponents don't often die when they are supposed to and you may still need to get free of them or their friends. One shot stops work best when done with a load of 12 gauge 00 buck at close range. Don't have optimistic expectations about how well your super duper pocket pistol load will work.

Being physically and mentally prepared for a confrontation means that in addition to range time, you should be in good physical shape. And that means exercise of some sort, often outdoors. This presents a dilemma for those of us who would rather go without our underwear than leave home without a gun. But how do you carry a firearm that you would stake your life on while, say, jogging? This is difficult — and I have learned the hard way. I run regularly and have tried many different methods, mostly with unsatisfactory results, including bouncing a Chief's Special down the pavement after it fell out of a shoulder holster during a run.

First is the question, "What weapon are you going to carry?" The first rule of a gunfight is have a gun. And that means with you — not at home or in the glove box. The second rule, assuming of course that you know how to use it, should be "Carry as much gun as you can under the circumstances." Don't use this as an excuse to drop clear down the scale to the .25 auto without asking yourself if your comfort level is really satisfied.

I used to run with a Walther TPH .22 and my Cold Steel folding knife. I felt adequately armed until surrounded by three large angry dogs that thought since I was running I must be good to eat. Things were tense until I convinced the construction crew nearby who owned the most aggressive animal that I really would begin killing dogs if they weren't called off promptly.

I switched to a lightweight Colt Commander .45 on the very next run. "No way" you think? "He's crazy, how do you run with a .45?" Not only do I regularly run 2.5 to 5 miles with the .45, I carry an

extra magazine, plus a Cold Steel large Voyager folding knife, and I do it in comfort all without scaring the little old ladies and kids in the park. I have tried virtually every possible holster type in every possible position.

What I have settled on is the following method. I use a fanny pack made by Galco. In it I carry my lightweight Commander and one extra magazine. Leave your keys and other junk at home. The pistol and magazine are held firmly in place by the neoprene and plastic insert, which prevents them from shifting, sloshing and clanking around.

Adjust the strap so it is tight around your waist. Do not wear it in the conventional manner on your hip or in front. The pistol fanny pack should be worn tightly, snugged up and centered on the small of your back. While running it will then be securely held above your buttocks.

I run in BDUs because they offer several advantages: They protect you from chaffing from the very snug fanny pack strap. You can put a thin ID case containing your identification with CCW or badge in the button-down rear pocket, and if you prefer, you can carry your favorite folding knife clipped securely in your strong hand front pocket as I do.

This method is a compromise, in that to bring your firearm into action you need to grasp the strap and pull the fanny pack around to the front. If you are alert to potential problems, you can accomplish this maneuver without even breaking stride, or appearing to do anything more aggressive than adjusting your pouch for comfort. The advantages, I feel, far outweigh the accessibility problem. You are able to carry a serious defensive tool securely and comfortably, even during sprints down the side of the highway.

The method is inconspicuous, as many joggers wear fanny packs for their keys, wallets, and other items. If you choose to carry the extra magazine, choose one with a plastic bottom so it doesn't mar the front grip on your \$1,500 Wilson .45 when the magazine shifts or rubs on your weapon. I can personally recommend the Wilson 8 round mags that have the plastic bumper pad.

This method works for me and may be worthwhile for others to try. Since there are variables such as body build, fanny pack configuration, weapon choice, and different carry laws in other states, be sure to use only what works for you. Test your method carefully to avoid heading down the road only to have your piece bounce out, hit the pavement, cause an AD, shooting yourself in the butt, getting arrested, then suing the author or publisher for giving you the idea. ☒



The solution to running with a gun is the fanny pack. Adjust the strap so it is tight around your waist. Do not wear it in the conventional manner on your hip or in front. The pistol fanny pack should be worn tightly, snugged up and centered on the small of your back. While running it will then be securely held above your buttocks.

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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

Losing ground: Report by U.S. intelligence panel tells congress Iran, Libya, North Korea and others are building elaborate underground weapons laboratories and production facilities. Such activities, report says, have contributed to "erosion" in U.S. intelligence gathering capabilities. Panel notes current "technical means of collection" inadequate against emerging threat. • **Military sex:** Defense Secretary Cohen decides against changing adultery statute, opting to "clarify" that court-martial not necessary unless affair impacts unit performance or discipline. New rules allow bad conduct discharge (which preserves military benefits) rather than dishonorable discharge. • **Kosovo bill:** Congress adopts new funding bill requiring president to consult with congress before sending troops to Kosovo; bill includes no funding for Bosnia mission. • **Air Force:** Entire Air Force to be reorganized into 10 expeditionary wings, each with 175 aircraft, in response to overseas deployment contingencies. Cutting edge of each wings will be 18 F-15C superiority fighters, 10 F-15E strike bombers, 8 F-16J defense suppression aircraft, 12 A-10 anti-tank aircraft, 24 F-16 fighter-bombers, and support, recon and refueling aircraft. • **Nuke fuel:** Reprocessing unwanted nuclear weapons into reactor fuel is dangerous, says report by American Federation of Scientists, and threatens to provide terrorists and rogue nations with significant source of bomb-making materials.

2

RUSSIA/FORMER U.S.S.R.

Nukes: Russian government announces plans to build 16 modern nuclear reactors by 2010. • **Blocked railways:** Striking miners threaten to expand blockages of Siberian railways. • **New army focus:** Security Council Chairman Andrei Kokoshin says army to focus on local and international conflicts, rather than national defense, as country cannot be attacked by foreign enemy due to large nuclear arsenal. • **Chechnya fire fight:** Two Russian armored vehicles wander into Chechnya, triggering brief fire fight and casualties on both sides. • **Uranium deals:** Russia objects to privatized U.S. uranium company's plans to sell 70 million pounds of uranium, lowering worldwide price Russia can expect for nuclear weapons materials.

6

LEBANON

Daily attacks: Roadside *Hezbollah* bombs and attacks on Israeli and SLA outposts by guerrillas and Hezbollah, *Amal*, and other groups continue daily, along with retaliatory shelling by Israelis. • Israeli plans strike targets in Lebanon in July and August. • Hezbollah battalion commander Hussein Hamoudi killed by Israeli shelling. • Hezbollah squad attacks Israeli outpost. • U.N. peacekeepers say Israeli troops combat testing NT Dandy (Long Spike) missile in Lebanon, which appears to be long range (possible 8 km) and have ability to select target in flight; one missile test kills guerrilla, another wounds four.

7

MEXICO

U.S. soldiers detained: Indian supporters of Revolutionary Industrial Party detain U.S. Army major and NCO in Los Platanos. Opposition National Action Party wins governorship of Aguascalientes province in August elections; PRI holds on to Oaxaca and Veracruz.

10

SIERRA LEONE

Conflicts continue: Small-scale fighting continues against RUF rebels and junta forces. Group of RUF rebels pretends to surrender in Kabala, then opens fire and loots town. • Thousands of refugees trapped against Liberian border by fighting. • Guinea deports 77 ex-junta soldiers for trial in Sierra Leone.

11

ANGOLA

General unrest: UNITA seizes control of strategic northeast crossroads town of Mussende, and key southern town of Chicomba, as fighting continues, after UNITA launches new offensive in July and captures 55 towns and villages. • African leaders denounce UNITA for causing new tensions in central Africa. • Human rights groups cite government and rebels with atrocities including rape, summary execution and forced conscription.

14

JAPAN

Asian security: U.S. Defense Secretary Cohen warns further deterioration of Japanese economy threatens security of most of Asia. New Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi has not inspired confidence he can fix economic mess, financial analysts report.

15

RWANDA

Rebels killed: Army said it killed 290 rebels during two weeks in July, including top rebel commander Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Nkundiye.

3

CHINA

Closed-door trials: Government continues arresting dissidents, ignoring calls to release them, conducting trials behind closed doors • Shanghai businessman Lin Hai arrested for providing information to exiled dissidents over Internet. • **Military business:** Government insists it will enforce order for military to give up business empire • Former Beijing communist party chief Chen Xitong sentenced to 16 years in prison in nation's largest corruption trial; dissidents demand Xitong be executed as lesser convicted officials have been. • Hong Kong legislator Chim Pui-Chung sentenced to three years in prison for forging stock certificates. • **Bombs away:** Moslem separatists set off two bombs in Xinjiang on 8 July; bombers arrested and jailed.

4

IRAN

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Clinton signs order 28 July imposing sanction, cutting off aid to seven Russian research and production establishments accused to selling weapons and sensitive technologies to Iran, Libya and North Korea. • Israel names five Russian companies linked to the Shahab-3 missile program (range 800 km); Israel insists cutting Russian aid now will slow Shahab program; Iran insists program receives no foreign help, and will be completed regardless of Russian sanctions. • Israel warns Shahab-4 (range 1,200 miles) may be completed by Iran in two years. Shahab-4 is based on Russian technology and not closely related to Shahab-3.

5

INDIA

Uranium seized: Indian police seize 6kg of enriched uranium in Madras, believed stolen from Indian nuclear reactor.

8

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban victories: Taliban Troops (in third offensive against north) capture Numousa, a key town in Faryab Province. Unlike previous offenses, in which Taliban outran supply lines leaving advanced troops vulnerable to counter attacks, Taliban advanced at deliberate pace, consolidating each position before attacking the next. • Taliban troops overrun Daulatabad and Faizabad districts of Faryab Province, capturing 400 alliance troops. • Alliance troops in Balkh run up white flags and defect to Taliban. • 500 Alliance troops surrender to Taliban at Jumar Bazaar. • Taliban rejects any deal with Alliance other than unconditional surrender. • Taliban forces advance on border town of Hairatan, held by Dostam's Uzbek forces.

9

NIGERIA

New politics: Members of five official political parties, disbanded by the junta, form new United Nigerian Peoples Party. • Various tribal and ethnic groups form new political parties. Junta announces freedom for 1,000 political prisoners. • Pro-democracy groups complain Western countries becoming too friendly with junta.

2



13

CUBA

Assassination plot: *Miami Herald* reports of plot to assassinate Castro financed by Cuban exiles in Miami. Plot reportedly foiled in Dominican Republic after informant told FBI of plan.

12

COLOMBIA

President Pastrana: Rebels launch 46 attacks in August before Pastrana takes office, capturing 110 soldiers and police. • Truck bomb explodes at airport as dignitaries arrive for Pastrana inauguration. Pastrana fires entire top military leadership and appoints General Fernando Tapias as new military chief. • Outgoing President Samper admits government assassinated 49 people between 1991 and 1993, promising not to rest until responsible parties brought to justice.

17

KOREA

General execution: North Korea executes four-star General Ri Bong-Won, the 50th top-ranking officer to be executed in past year • South Korea sacks commanders of First Fleet, 68th Division, and 102nd Brigade for failing to block North Korean infiltration.

16

ALBANIA

Military draft: Government plans to draft twice as many 18-year-olds this year as in prior years, to prepare for future in increasingly unstable region. However, 70% of local officials belong to Democratic Party, and refuse to cooperate with socialist government in Tirana. • Albania receives \$120-million aid package from Italy.

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I Was There

by John P. Cogburn

The Woman Who Came In From The Cold

It was a bitterly cold evening when I stepped out into Istanbul's dimly lit city streets. My camouflage utilities were covered by a jogging suit as I trudged along the empty cobblestone avenue, its crevices filled with fresh snow. I gave a quick wave to the submachine-gun armed guard of the Turkish *Gendarme* as he stood against a stone wall to shield himself from the winter's brisk winds. He acknowledged me with "Yakshamlar" (good evening), as he puffed away on a pungent Turkish Marlboro.

The walk to my post was the same every midnight shift. The smell of fresh baked bread, brewing tea, and the thick haze of pollution created by coal-burning stoves and automobiles would sting the senses. I walked up to a steel Victorian gate and waved for the guard inside the compound to open the passageway. The burly unshaven guard, with a handlebar mustache, rubbed the light fog off of the ballistic window, smiled, then buzzed the gate open. The white marble steps which led to the U.S. Consulate's chancery building were blackish-gray, thanks to the tiny coal ashes floating aimlessly through the air like the snow. The Marine Security Guard (MSG) on duty clicked the door open before I could reach for the handle. I looked up to the security camera and waved as I shook off brown snow.

Post One of the Consulate was manned 24 hours by one Marine after business hours. I quickly slipped off my jogging suit and retrieved my pistol belt, PR-24 night stick, and State Department-issued .38-caliber revolver, loaded with hydra-shock bullets. I relieved Corporal Rodriguez (who had already changed into civvies in anticipation of being relieved) and accounted for the post's property/combination cards for the spooks' offices and safes in case of an emergency, digital pager system for diplomatic staff, classified binder of terrorist threat reports, keys for the consulate, and a rather generous weapons safe containing UZI 9mm submachine guns, Mini-14s, shotguns, CS/CN grenades and launchers, pistols and combat gear for the entire MSG Detachment, and enough ammunition to instigate and maintain a small war. Then, the telephone rang.

"American Consulate, Istanbul, Turkey, Marine Security Guard Post One, may I help you, sir?"

The Turkish telephone operator/interpreter advised me that a woman was outside and that she wanted to enter the compound because there was an emergency. I asked the operator if the woman was an American citizen and he said that the guard at the front gate couldn't communicate with her because of a language barrier. I hesitated for a moment, then told the operator to tell the guards to let

her in. After all, she would be searched at the front gate, I was surrounded by ballistic glass and concrete, and I had plenty of rounds to send downrange if necessary.

I watched the woman waddle up the steps bundled up in a scarf, knit cap and ankle-length coat. She was wearing Coke-bottle bifocals and smiled in relief when she entered the door in front of my post. I dismissed the Turkish guard and the woman approached the counter after removing her knit cap and scarf. Her hair was curled as if she had just left an appointment with the hairdresser from hell.

She rattled off something I couldn't understand, so I leaned in closer to the glass.

"Slow down." I raised my hands, gesturing to her that I had no idea what she had just said.

"Ma'am, do you speak English?"

"*Nyet!*" she replied, then handed me a red passport embossed with gold Russian writing. Under the Cyrillic characters was "Diplomatic Passport" written in French.

I opened an index card box containing several different language cards and removed the set of cards marked Russian.

On one side was English and the other was Russian. Each statement and choice of answers were marked with numbers to correspond in English and Russian. I handed her the first card and she pointed to the answer indicating she wanted to speak to an official from the Consulate, and this wasn't an official visit. She was constantly looking over her shoulder and she fidgeted during our Tonto-meets-Custer encounter.

Now my adrenaline was pumping. I had a "walk-in," as they were referred to in diplomatic lingo. We passed several more cards through the small opening between the counter and ballistic glass. She then pointed to the word Spanish which was the answer to a question asking if she was fluent in any other languages.

"Corporal Rodriguez" were the first words racing through my mind. He had just been relieved from duty and now was probably comfortably kicked-back watching a movie at the Marine House.

"Tom, it's John. I need you to get back here right now," I said sternly.

"What's going on?"

"I can't tell you over the phone, just get over here." I hung up the phone and smiled toward the woman to try to comfort her. I then pushed the pager numbers for the MSG Detachment Commander and the Diplomatic Regional Security Officer to apprise them of the situation.

Rodriguez rang again, his Latin temper flaring. He didn't digest



too well the fact that a lance corporal was ordering a corporal to get back to the consulate — “right now!” I changed the tone of my voice from a command to concern. “I need you here, ASAP.”

Minutes later, Rodriguez arrived, banging on the rear window of Post One. He didn't use the front entrance because he didn't know what type of situation he was coming into, so he used the emergency response route to make certain that Post One was secure before he entered the consulate. I told him all was clear, and briefed him at Post One while the woman nervously paced the small foyer area in front of us.

Corporal Rodriguez brought the woman inside the chancery after running her through a metal detector, which seemed to amuse her because she had to pass through several times.

While Rodriguez interviewed her in the ornate waiting area, I answered the incoming phone calls. The first call was from the Detachment Commander. We communicated through a secret list of code words, numbers and names to get our point across, since all phone lines were considered unsecured. The Gunny advised me that he was coming in. The RSO phoned next, and he wasn't in any mood to talk in codes or search to find his code sheet to match what I was saying, so he bluntly said in his New Orleans accent, “Just tell me what country she's from.”

“Russia.” He hung up.

Corporal Rodriguez returned and the woman started dressing back into her coat and knit cap. “She and her husband want to defect. They were stationed in Cuba for a long time, that's why she speaks Spanish,” Rodriguez explained. “She wants to go now or someone will know that she's missing.” He placed Xerox copies of the woman's passport and other identification papers on the counter in front of me. “She wants to meet at Taxim Square tomorrow evening with her husband.”

We watched the woman walk down the marble steps, and followed her in the mobile security cameras until she disappeared around a foggy corner. I turned to Rodriguez and we slapped a high five.

“We should get a Navy Achievement Medal or Navy Commendation outta this,” he speculated as he started writing his incident report.

The next day, the Detachment Commander called the Marine House and ordered the entire MSG Detachment to report to the consulate. We mustered on the top floor of “the bubble,” a room guaranteed free from eavesdropping by cloak-and-dagger types. I was the last to enter the room, and I was surprised to see the Russian woman sitting at the head of the table, this time wearing a huge grin.

“You performed excellent on the drill,” the woman said, after introducing herself as a language specialist for the CIA. She didn't look half-bad with the wig removed and a little make-up — or maybe I'd been away from the States too long.

Later that day, as I walked down the marble steps, I thought to myself, “Man, it would be nice to know Russian,” in a hindsight evaluation of the incident.

Wishes do come true. Three months later, the Detachment Commander summoned me to the Consulate expeditiously. When I arrived, I was handed a message marked SECRET, ordering me to report to the American Embassy in Moscow, USSR. An espionage incident had just occurred involving the Marine Detachment (Lonetree and Bracy) and I was one of 29 MSGs from throughout MSGBN that were being sent to relieve the Moscow Detachment. I was to leave within 48 hours and report to Company Headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, and I could tell no one. Upon arrival at Company HQ, I was “welcomed” aboard with the 28 other Moscow replacements with open arms, room restriction, and orders to say nothing about our new assignments. We were told, “You're the cream of the crop from the battalion. You were hand-picked and selected by the State Department and Marine Corps, but, before we send you to Moscow, you have to be cleared.”

“Cleared” meant that we (the cream) had to be polygraphed by the NIS and pass a psychological interview and exam; two days' worth of questions in empty cottages concerning untruthfulness, espionage, and homosexuality.

Planting my signature on a waiver of my constitutional rights cleared the path for my assignment to Moscow.

John Cogburn is a deputy sheriff in South Florida. ✂

photos courtesy author



Author in uniform (far right) on the first day of his assignment in Istanbul, Turkey. The proper handling of a Russian “defector” was rewarded with an assignment in Russia.

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heroes TIME forgot

The True Story Of Operation Tailwind

by Maj. John L. Plaster,
USAR (Ret.)

in the late summer of 1970, the secret war in southern Laos had taken a turn for the worse. The North Vietnamese Army had seized the region's most crucial terrain, the Bolovens Plateau, overrunning several CIA airfields and forward bases.

At an emergency meeting in Bangkok, the CIA's senior war planner told the visiting Chief SOG, Colonel John "Skip" Sadler, that two CIA-supported H'mong tribal battalions were trying to recapture the most important stronghold on the Bolovens Plateau, and "were getting the *bejesus* kicked out of them daily." With each passing day the danger grew that the entire H'mong force would be annihilated and with it any chance of recapturing southern Laos. In this critical situation, the CIA officer asked, could SOG insert a Hatchet Force raider company some 40 miles from the contested stronghold, and kick up such a ruckus in the NVA's rear that it would draw the enemy away?

There certainly wasn't an organization more fitting for such a top secret, covert mission. The Studies and Observations Group, or SOG, based in South Vietnam, had been running American-led covert operations into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam for five years. Raiding the heavily occupied Ho Chi Minh Trail corridor of eastern Laos was no small request, but on the other hand here was virgin territory: No SOG raider company had ever been so deep in Laos, so the possibilities seemed lucrative. But, SOG chief Sadler noted, the target was beyond SOG's authorized

(above) Each of the three USMC HH-53s carried one SOG raider platoon for the 60-mile flight into Laos. (left) SOG's Co. B Hatchet Force, Montagnards lead by U.S. Special Forces NCOs and officers, boards USMC helos at Dak To, South Vietnam, for insertion deep into Laos to divert NVA troops from friendly forces.

Eugene McCarley



courtesy Eugene McCarley



operations area and they'd need special approval from the U.S. ambassador in Vientiane. "He's already approved it," the CIA officer announced. With the concurrence of the U.S. commander in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, Operation Tailwind, as it was codenamed, was a "go."

At Kontum, South Vietnam, Company B, Command and Control Central (CCC), 5th Special Forces Group, was alerted on 4 September 1970. Leading Operation Tailwind would be an older officer built like a stevedore but with a friendly small-town demeanor, Captain Eugene McCarley. Called "personable" and "intelligent" by his men, McCarley was grounded in tactics, a confident former NCO with several Vietnam tours.

McCarley's 120-man SOG Hatchet Force company was organized similarly to a U.S. infantry unit, except American Green Berets filled the NCO and officer positions, and the foot soldiers were either Chinese Nungs or, as in B Company's case, Montagnard tribesmen.

Since the target area lay 60 miles northwest of SOG's Dak To launch site, an impractical distance for Hueys to ferry so large a force, SOG looked for heavy CH-53 Sikorskys to insert the raider company in a single lift. The only CH-53 squadron in South Vietnam was HMH-463, a USMC Sea Stallion outfit in Da Nang. Though lacking cross-border experience, they'd have to do.

Operation Tailwind

Escorted by 12 USMC twin-engined Cobra gunships, on 11 September the big Marine Sikorskys picked up Company B's 16 Americans and 110 Montagnards, refueled at Dak To, and took off. Operation Tailwind was underway.

The helicopter armada paralleled the remote border for 50 miles then turned west into the high mountains of Laos and almost immediately NVA gunners began tracking them, spraying the air with heavy machine guns. Inside the semi-trailer-size cargo compartments, bullets cracked through

the floors amid the din of whining turbines, hit after hit after hit, sounding like someone shooting a tin can with a BB gun, but the huge choppers just kept lumbering between the jungled hills and limestone bluffs.

Inside one bird, blood sprayed on the ceiling and a Yard collapsed, badly wounded; everyone backed away while a medic treated him. Then another round penetrated and another man randomly fell, then another. Then the choppers slowed and began a wide orbit while Marine Cobras fired white phosphorous rockets to mask them from anti-aircraft guns. The Sea Stallions circled down, then the shooting

almost stopped and the ramp doors dropped, disclosing a bright sun and lush green countryside. Beneath a sky alive with fighters and gunships, the Hatchet Force men trotted to a woodline as the Sea Stallions lifted away. For the next three days, each day, all day, Cobras or A-1s or AC-130 Spectres would be overhead.

Captain McCarley wasted not a minute and immediately began

Ignoring his own injuries and the continuing fire, Rose crawled over and treated them. When others slept, Rose worked; when others ate, Rose worked. He never complained, just saved lives.

aggressively advancing northwest, because he knew any hesitation would allow the NVA to fix them, shell them and overrun them. So long as he kept them moving, McCarley kept the initiative.

As quickly as they left the Landing Zone they heard field telephones ringing; maneuvering toward the sound, the Hatchet Force men hit an NVA squad that fired a few rounds and fled. Then the point squad reported bunkers; they were just a quarter-mile from their LZ.

Battlefield Bonanza

McCarley swung two platoons into a defensive perimeter while several squads swept through to see what they'd found. "It was amazing," said Specialist Five Craig Schmidt. A 500-yard-long line of earthen bunkers was crammed with 6-foot-long 122mm and 140mm rockets, thousands of them, intended for bombarding Da Nang and Chu Lai, 100 miles to the east.

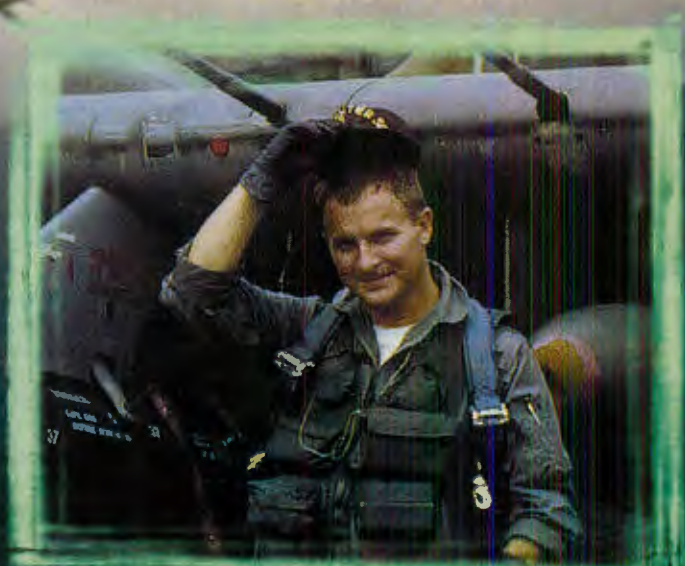
But that would not happen now. Hurriedly, Schmidt and Sergeant First Class Jim Brevelle laid a demolition charge in each of the 20 bunkers, linking them all together with det cord and dual-priming with time-delay detonators. As the company headed out, they lit the 30-minute fuzes.

Company B had marched 1,000 yards west when an explosion shook the ground followed by 30 secondaries, the prettiest music a Special Forces demo man can hear. Rockets would continue to cook off for 12 hours with the resounding echoes announcing a challenge: Come on down, try to stop us; unless you come soon, we'll destroy everything within 10 miles.

One NVA platoon took the challenge. McCarley shot it out with them for an hour then backed off, called several sets of fighters in on them, then swung around and continued heading west.

The fight had left several Montagnards seriously wounded, so the Hatchet Force secured an LZ for medevac. Before a chopper could get there, 150 NVA massed and assaulted; the Hatchet Force fought them off, pounded them with air and, carrying their wounded along, began marching west again.

By now it was almost dark, time to set up a perimeter for the



A-1 Skyraiders over Laos, where they provided crucial support of the embattled Hatchet Force. (inset) USAF 1st Lt. Tom Stump, A-1 pilot who was awarded a DFC for his spectacular flying in suppressing enemy fire to allow extraction of outnumbered SOG force.

Bernard "Woody" Newell



Aboard one Marine chopper, SOG command element cammos up. Commander Capt. Eugene McCarley (at right), medic Gary Michael Rose (center).

night — at least that's what the NVA expected. Determined not to stop long enough for the enemy to mass superior forces against them, McCarley kept Company B moving.

A Moving Target

All night the Hatchet Force bumped into NVA squads and each time either a salvo from AC-130 gunships or a quick assault forced them aside. Nothing would stop the Hatchet Force. If they encountered NVA in strength, McCarley called air and swung right or left but kept moving. That whole night they marched west, deeper into Laos — and the farther they marched the bigger a threat they posed, and the better they performed their diversionary role.

By dawn, nine of the 16 Americans and even more Montagnards had been wounded. The Hatchet Force medic, Sergeant Gary Michael Rose, patched them up and kept them going.

Not long after sunrise they hit a small delay position with five NVA, then another 40 NVA hit their left flank supported by mortars and rocket launchers. Company B fought through the delay position and called air strikes on the others.

By midday the company was walking a ridge a half-mile above Highway 165 when the jungle thinned and they could see the road and hundreds of NVA in a long column and a dozen trucks paralleling them. McCarley called in A-1 Skyraiders, destroying the trucks and scattering the infantry. "From the amount of men I saw on that road," Craig Schmidt thought, "if they ever really knew where we were at, they could take us out."

To keep the enemy guessing, the tactically adroit McCarley kept off roads and main trails, hurrying instead along streambeds, small paths or thinly vegetated ridges. And each time the NVA blocked the Hatchet Force, he pounded them with Skyraiders or Cobras or Phantoms and bypassed them.

With more than two dozen wounded, some seriously, movement was becoming impeded. To medevac the worst cases, a CH-53 arrived with two medics aboard, Staff Sergeant John Padgett and Sergeant John Browne. Heavy NVA fire greeted the big Sikorsky, slapping slugs through its thin aluminum skin.

Lying on the CH-53's lowered ramp, Browne held Padgett by the belt while he reached for the wounded Yards as the Hatchet Force medic, Gary Michael Rose, offered them up. Before the first casualty was aboard, enemy fire surged and the pilot had to climb away, banked right, and an RPG hit the Sikorsky amidship. Padgett is convinced God rode with that CH-53, for the anti-tank rocket punched through the bird's belly, flew through the cabin and through a gas tank, spewing high octane fuel on everyone, but it didn't detonate. The chopper limped about five miles and sat down hard in the middle of an empty bunker area. Twenty minutes later another CH-53 came in, and while the crews and medics climbed

ladders, enemy .51-caliber machine guns opened fire. They managed to fly away but five minutes later made a forced landing, the second CH-53 lost that day. Yet another helicopter rescued them.

The young Hatchet Force medic, Gary Rose, was now heavily pressed, hustling to keep men alive, helping carry the worst cases himself; several times he charged through fire to treat fallen Montagnards or Americans. "Many times he had three or four of five wounded at once," Craig Schmidt said.

Their second night they had to get some rest. Captain McCarley had them dig in on a knoll overlooking the road, the highest ground he could find. NVA probes began just after dusk, mostly RPGs lobbed from the darkness, answered by claymores and Spectre gunship fire. Few men slept.

A Rose Is A Rose, Is A Rose

One RPG rocket burst near Craig Schmidt, the demo man, and Gary Rose, the medic, spraying both with shrapnel. Two nearby Montagnards were severely wounded. Ignoring his own injuries and the continuing fire, Rose crawled over and treated them. When others slept, Rose worked; when others ate, Rose worked. He never complained, just saved lives. "He was doing whatever it took to do the job," Schmidt said.

It was a given the NVA would attack in strength at dawn, so Capt. McCarley had them up and underway an hour before daylight. It was long and arduous, but Day Three went like Day Two, with the advancing SOG company parrying enemy blows, destroying stockpiles whenever encountered, and continuing to march westward.

By the next morning, most Hatchet Force men were so tired they wanted to die. They'd fought their way through thick jungle, 15 miles cross-country since landing, an extraordinary pace. That fourth morning they'd marched west another three hours when the point took fire from a few NVA who then fled into a bunker area. McCarley felt it was his to seize so he ordered an attack. After softening the NVA positions with air strikes and small-arms fire, the Hatchet Force men advanced. Craig Schmidt and another squad leader, Sergeant Manuel Orozco, got their troops on line, and assaulted. The enemy fell back, abandoning a battalion-size basecamp but for two bunkers held by cut-off NVA. While fire kept the NVAs' heads down, two Yards crept forward and rolled grenades inside.

The basecamp was seized, but by now the friendly wounded had risen to 49 — nearly 50% casualties — and the sole overworked medic, Doc Rose, himself wounded twice, could barely keep up with the work.

While Rose performed miracles, the rest of the Hatchet Force searched the basecamp's many hootches and bunkers. Fifty-four NVA bodies were discovered but none yielded significant intelligence. Along with four trucks, they found a 120mm mortar and nine tons of rice.



One hooch in the NVA "Binh Tram," overrun by the SOG force shortly before extraction.

Most Significant ... Intelligence

Then one search party called Capt. McCarley to a large bunker 12 feet below ground: Inside were maps covering the walls and hundreds of pounds of documents stored in footlockers and pouches. Clearly this was more than a battalion basecamp — it was a major logistical command center, probably the headquarters that controlled nearby Highway 165. “Pack up all the documents,” McCarley ordered; they would carry them out. Less than 30 minutes after seizing the camp, Company B was moving west again. In their wake, demolition charges went off, destroying the four trucks.

After leaving the camp, they were stalked by the NVA at every turn and by now, four days into the mission, FACs overhead could see enemy units converging on Company B from two directions. At this point, every American had been wounded and several men, like Schmidt and Rose, had multiple wounds. It was time to get out. To expedite movement, McCarley abandoned the jungle for a smooth road and poured on the speed. An NVA squad attempted to delay them but a quick airstrike and aggressive assault ended that. Then came word that the Marine CH-53s had launched and would be there in 30 minutes.

Despite his fatigue, McCarley fought smart and refused to use the first LZ they came upon, where enemy gunners on high ground too easily could fire down on the huge Sikorskys. Just before the choppers arrived, Company B encircled another LZ while a SOG man riding with the FAC, William “Country” Grimes, brought in A-1s led by USAF Major Art Bishop with CBU-30 tear gas bomblets to blind anti-aircraft gunners.



Ted Wicorek



Tailwind commander Capt. Eugene McCarley, left, shows strain — and pride — of four days of intense fighting. Guts and choppers, not gas and chemicals, brought the hatchet force back. (left) Operation Tailwind medic Rose, center, single-handedly treated 60 wounded men, although himself wounded three times. His DSC is now being reconsidered for the MOH.

One CH-53 landed and lifted away with the most badly wounded and the captured documents. NVA mortars began pounding the LZ, answered by F-4 Phantoms that dropped a dozen napalm canisters in a single pass. USAF First Lieutenant Tom Stump, who would receive a Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions, maneuvered his A-1 beneath low clouds and between jungled buttes to dump cluster bombs and napalm across swarms of closing enemy soldiers.

Rather than get bogged down defending the threatened LZ, McCarley led his two remaining platoons to yet another LZ, where Cobra and Skyraider fire and a sudden landing generated only moderate groundfire. A second platoon climbed into a CH-53 for a clean getaway. NVA by the hundreds were now streaming out of the hills and let loose a nearly constant barrage.

Down to his last platoon, McCarley boldly repeated his tactic of abandoning one LZ to go to a new one. The Cobras and A-1s hit ahead and behind the last 40 Hatchet Force men as they ran, pounding the NVA with rockets, canons, tear gas and cluster bombs.

Last Man Out

By the time McCarley reached a field of elephant grass large enough to accommodate a CH-53, he learned the helicopter's station time had almost expired; get out fast, he was told, or start evading.

With NVA close behind, the SOG men trotted into the 6-foot-high grass just as that welcome bird came in for them.

Captain McCarley was the last man to climb aboard.

The extraction had been extraordinary, requiring strikes from 72 U.S. fighters, nearly a half-million pounds of bombs, rockets

and napalm. “If it wasn’t for the air cover,” one Company B veteran said, “there’s no way we would have got out of there.” The SOG men had nothing but praise for the A-1 aviators and Marine pilots who flew repeatedly through heavy fire but never flinched. “Cool, real cool,” was how one SOG man described them.

Company B had suffered three Montagnards killed and 33 wounded, along with all 16 Americans wounded. In three days of heavy fighting they had killed 144 NVA, wounded another 50, with an estimated 288 enemy killed by air.

CIA leaders were “most appreciative” that SOG’s diversion, indeed, had saved their threatened H’mong force, which recaptured the lost strongpoint. But that sentiment went unshared by senior MACV officers, who complained that three multi-million-dollar CH-53s had been lost.

Then the captured documents were examined by the MACV J-2 who found not nuggets but the mother lode: 400 pages contained what the U.S. command’s most senior intelligence officer called “the most significant collateral intelligence on the [Ho Chi Minh Trail] since the beginning of the war.” Major General Potts, the MACV J-2, “was beside himself,” SOG Lieutenant Colonel Galen Radke said.

Continued on page 69



Russians will often brag that they were the first to recognize that there are few things as unavoidable in life as death and taxes.

Death, the Russians say, can come as a welcomed relief after an all-night KGB interrogation of a botched coup, for example. Taxes, on the other hand, are best avoided ... period.

That is, unless of course, your name is Sergey Almazov.

Almazov is Russia's top tax cop, and earlier this year he made a dire statement. Tax-related crime in Russia, he said, had crossed "that critical borderline beyond which the threat to the state's economic security had become a harsh reality."

That was all we needed to hear, and as the United States Congress was beginning

TEXT & PHOTOS BY MARK H. MILSTEIN

to hear testimony intended to tame the sometimes out-of-control tactics of our own Internal Revenue Service (IRS), *SOF* flew off to Moscow to spend some time with the Russian Federation tax police to get an idea of how Ivan collects taxes behind the Vodka Curtain.

"Because so few people and businesses actually pay all the taxes they are supposed to, we've had to resort to other tactics to get their attention," said Aleksii Poshupkin, spokesman for the Federation tax police. "The government is broke. We need money, and many of those who owe us are not willing to pay. Therefore we must sometimes use fear and armed force. Believe me, if we come to your door at three o'clock in the morning,


you will pay us everything you owe."

And yet, even with the nightly news showing balaclavaed tax police using power saws to cut through the doors of businesses suspected of tax evasion, the tax ministry and the Yeltsin government have done little to break the headlong rush to make tax evasion the national pastime.

Most people here still view the state as they did in the Soviet era — as an intrusive, thieving entity that is best outwitted or ignored. Anyone who openly declares his income to tax authorities is considered a fool.

Russians commonly justify their tax evasion on the grounds that the rates are excessive. But Russia's tax rates are comparable to the rest of Eastern Europe's. One of

DEATH & TAXES



Inside Russia's IRS-ky

Moscow's English-language newspapers recently ran an article stating that currently, anyone in Russia who earns more than \$8,000 annually faces a 35% tax rate without any deductions. Hungarians with a similar income, for example, face a 42% tax with no deductions.

Taxed If Caught

The real problem is that Russia imposes a dizzying variety of taxes, constantly changes the rules, and enforces them arbitrarily. In one recent survey, companies cited three main reasons for resorting to unreported cash or barter transactions: capricious tax collection, an unreliable banking system, and the need to have a source of untraceable funds for bribes.

From huge, state-run industries that owe billions in back pay to average citizens who keep rubles hidden under the mattress, Russians have taken to tax dodging as they adapt to the thrills and spills of a market economy.

Earlier this past summer, the Kremlin announced that government revenues for 1998 would come up short a staggering 30%, creating a multi-billion-dollar deficit blamed largely on tax evasion.

As a result, millions of Russians who rely on government checks, from soldiers to mine workers to senior citizens, will not get paid on time. If tax money and paychecks don't start flowing soon, *SOF* was told, there are fears the country could face a long winter of social unrest.

"Nothing," according to top tax cop Almazov, "gives greater incentive to tax cheats than the knowledge that our laws are weak." Almazov claimed that, in nine

(opposite) Business has come to Russia: perhaps biggest business is avoiding plethora of VAT, excise, import, export, income taxes. While Russian Tax Ministry presses government for new laws, they enforce existing laws as best they can. Here they pose with the toys of enforcement. (left) Tax Ministry agents received suitable equipment from Army, such as this Krinkov and experimental bulletproof helmet.



Russian revenue agent bought this truckload of bootleg booze, with bogus tax stamps, from alcohol wholesale warehouse. When money changed hands his colleagues moved in. (Inset) Tax agents inventory buy.

out of 10 cases, criminals managed to go unpunished.

"In many cases even that one out of 10 was not punished in accordance with the severity of the crime," Almazov said. "This is due to the weakness of our legislation. We can't go around beating and threatening every Russian who owes the treasury 100 rubles, but we must get people to pay what they owe."

"Our position," Almazov stressed, "is as follows — tax legislation must be milder but responsibility for its violation should be harsher."

The new Russian Federation criminal code has largely disappointed them. It provides for shorter imprisonment for tax-related crimes, does not envisage confiscation of property (although to date this practice has not stopped), does not halt the escape of funds abroad, and does not envisage a law on bringing this money back home to Russia.

Fishing With A Holed Net

A logical question arises: Does Moscow seriously want to put an end to tax crime? Tens of millions of dollars a year are escaping to offshore banks in Hungary, Cyprus and Switzerland. The tax services cannot halt that flow or turn to their colleagues abroad for legal assistance, because Russia has not yet signed some necessary conventions in this sphere. In 1993 the Russian presidency issued a corresponding edict, but to this day the foreign ministry has done little to speed up its implementation.

Russians once made heroes of those who fought capitalism, Yankee imperialism and died in the name of Communism, Almazov explained. "Today, it seems, it's the tax cheat who is called a hero," he said.

"At the same time," Almazov continued, "the tax police are pictured as something akin to the notorious squads that confiscated food from peasants [under Lenin's decree]."



Russia's newspapers and television news broadcasts were flooded with new, more dire threats for those evading taxes. With Xenia Pavlova, *SOF's* new, improved and better-built translator in tow, we began pounding on doors at the tax ministry attempting to get permission to go out on a tax raid.

Nothing, we soon discovered, had ever proven so difficult. *SOF* was in tough competition for space on a raid with every media outlet in the former Soviet Union, as well as all three major U.S. TV networks. Xenia was pressed into service, and asked to use every ounce of her charm to give us a fighting chance.

Days passed. Moscow was sweltering through the worst heat wave in nearly 27 years, and with no air-conditioning to be found, the 95-plus degree temperatures were quickly draining our spirits and

strength. We needed a miracle.

"I can't promise you anything with a raid," Poshupkin told us, "but why don't you meet me at our shop? That should hold you for a day or two."

Selling The Spoils

Like their American law-enforcement counterparts, the Russian tax police have taken to selling off large amounts of goods confiscated from tax cheats.

Located off Leninsky Prospect, just south of the Kremlin, the retail shop, known simply as "Arrears," resembles a 1960s-era Sears surplus store.

Fur coats compete for space next to snow tires, VCRs, 286-computers and children's sneakers. There are even a few slightly worn bikinis hanging next to a small shelf stuffed with cellular telephones and fake Rolex watches.

"A man could get a complete outfit here for about \$15," said Vladimir Lipov, Arrears' manager.

With about \$20,000 a month in sales, Arrears is not going to balance the Russian budget any time soon. But Lipov said the store was selling a strong but simple message along with its bargain-priced wares: "When someone comes here and buys a computer or a copy machine, he gets a bargain," Lipov said. "But he also knows that it could be his watch, his wife's fur or VCR that's on our shelves if he doesn't pay his taxes."

That's great, we responded in a sarcastic tone, but what do we have to do in order to get out with the tax police? *SOF* had already endured a week of false starts and baseless promises, and although the mainstream press was having a field day following the antics of the tax ministry SWAT team as they raided the offices of well-known Russian entrepreneurs and the penthouses of foreign businessmen, we were stuck watching overweight Russian housewives searching through the confiscated underwear of some rich tax cheat. Even an afternoon of pho-



Tax agents video evidence, here a phony tax stamp, while warehouse watchman looks on. His reaction? He offered to get them a deal on a new video camera. Their reaction? We can discuss it later, as we'll be seeing a lot of each other...

tographing nervous Russians carrying shopping bags of old receipts lining up in the dark, stifling-hot hallways of the ministry to be audited didn't satisfy our needs.

Our only hope, we told Xenia, was to let them see our faces every day until they got tired of us and gave in. Thankfully it didn't take long.

"Let me explain to you the makeup of the tax ministry law-enforcement branch," Poshupkin said. "We have a federal police unit, made up of an elite force who get the same training and funding as our OMON troops. Then, every *oblast* (region) has its own tax police collection unit. Those groups, such as in Moscow, are usually a joint police task force. We use local police as our force, and team them together with tax specialists from our local offices."

No Statutory Patience

On our way over to the tax police training center, we told Poshupkin about the tax situation in America, and how groups such as Posse Comitatus and the Freemen had sprung up and refused to pay taxes or recognize the validity of the federal government. We also explained how Congress was looking into the questionable practices of the IRS. We then told him how many times members of those groups have taken to armed standoff to prevent law enforcement from arresting them.

"No one would be that stupid in Russia," Poshupkin laughed. "Our police don't have time for such things as waiting weeks for someone to surrender. They have to go home and be with their families. We would get them out of there one way or another."

After touring the nearly empty tax police training facility, we again lucked out when *SOF* was given a chance to meet with the armory officer and photograph the ministry's special entry team.

"This is a special bulletproof helmet that was designed by the army but never put into service," said armory officer Victor Churilov, as we toured the equipment room. "It protects the entire face and the back of the head from gunshots. This glass can withstand a double strike from a

A Fifth of Vodka, no Fifth of Amendment: "We know what was going on here, so it's better if we write it in clear Russian," noted joint task force detective Andre Kisin. "The suspect then agrees with what I've written and he signs it." Warehouse watchman (right) and other employees obligingly sign confessions.



Busted: Warehouse owner calmly lights a smoke while tax agents count some \$250,000 worth of rubles found in box under cash register. (right) Agent points out counterfeit tax stamps to owner. Owner calls his lawyer from cell phone (below).



Kalashnikov round. Our men wear this when we go after enterprises which are controlled by organized crime."

"These pistols here," Churilov pointed out, "are standard police issue. Nothing special. Our bulletproof vests are also from the army. That's our entry equipment. Ropes. Clamps. Mountain climbing gear for tall buildings. We even have this Stihl saw we can use to get into safes and doors that don't want to open when we ask."

Poshupkin returned an hour later with good news. We were to meet him tomorrow morning at the metro station. The ministry had planned a raid against an alcohol wholesaler suspected of evading taxes. *SOF* was invited to join them.

"This is my own car," Poshupkin explained, after I asked whether the new Ford we were driving in was confiscated. "There were no cars at the motor pool today that were working. I don't like bringing my own car on a raid. Some months ago a colleague of mine drove his car on such a raid and two weeks later someone blew it up. I guess they were able to trace the car's number plates to his house."

Five minutes later we pulled up behind a white Toyota mini-bus at the edge of a crumbling industrial park in Moscow's southeast side. Eight members of the tax

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Seven Beans in the Wheel



Taurus'
SnubNose Magnum

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

The defensive revolver is far from moribund. A surprising number of non-uniformed law-enforcement personnel still pack small, short-barreled revolvers chambered for the .38 Special, and now more recently, the .357 Magnum cartridges. The federal ban against semiautomatic pistol magazines holding more than 10 rounds has helped to re-focus attention on revolvers for self-defense applications. Taurus has even introduced a line of wheel guns with seven-shot cylinders, the original capacity of the M1911 magazine. *Soldier Of Fortune* was recently sent a snubnose version of this revolver series from Taurus International Manufacturing, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 16175 N.W. 49th Avenue, Miami, FL 33014; phone: 305-624-1115; fax: 305-623-7506) for test and evaluation.

Chambered for the .357 Magnum round, the Taurus Model 617 is available either blued or in stainless steel. Manufactured in Brazil, our stainless steel test specimen features a mill-finished drop-forged frame manufactured from AISI 416 stainless steel. The barrel and cylinder are produced from AISI 410 stainless steel. The finish is an attractive high polish, except for the top strap and top of the barrel which have been given a glass-beaded, satin finish to reduce glare.

Cylinder-to-forcing-cone gap on our test specimen is 0.003-inch (0.003- to 0.008-inch is the generally accepted tolerance range). Fore-and-aft cylinder play is minimal, but the lateral play is almost excessive. As previously stated, the cylinder holds seven rounds, and rotation is to the left (counterclockwise) in the Smith & Wesson manner (Colt cylinders rotate to the right — clockwise). The ejector rod does not quite permit complete ejection of the empty cases. The cylinder

latch is patterned after that of Smith & Wesson and must be pushed forward to swing out the cylinder.

The 2-inch barrel is equipped with a full-length, integral ejector shroud. In 1984 Taurus stopped pinning barrels to the frames after perfecting a method of precision threading that eliminated this requirement. The barrel has five grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 18-3/4 inches. The overall length is only 6.625 inches, with a weight, empty, of 28.3 ounces.

A guide-in-coil-type mainspring is set into the round-butt frame. The narrow trigger is smooth, as it should be for double-action shooting. The single-action trigger-pull weight is a very smooth 4.25 pounds. Double-action pull weight is excellent at only 8.0 pounds with absolutely no loading at the end of the stroke.

Mounted in the frame, the floating firing pin must be struck by a transfer bar, which, in turn, receives the hammer's full impact. Should the finger slip off the trigger while the hammer is falling forward, the transfer bar will drop downward, out of the hammer's path, and the firing pin will not be driven forward. This revolver is also available with a bobbed hammer. Although most firing with this type of handgun will be double-action, I prefer to retain the single-action



Seven beans in the wheel; Taurus M617 revolver provides as much fire-power as an original M1911 seven-round magazine. (below) Taurus M617 .357 Magnum snubnose, left-side view. Note integral full-length barrel shroud and cylinder latch, which is patterned after that of Smith & Wesson and must be pushed forward to swing out the cylinder.





Taurus M617 .357 Magnum snubnose, right-side view. Note high-polish stainless steel finish, black neoprene-type grips and serrated ramp-type front sight. (right) Taurus key-lock safety system raises a pin and its shroud to impinge against the frame if someone attempts to roll the hammer rearward.

option, in case a longer, more carefully controlled shot is required.

The Model 617 is equipped with the interesting Taurus key lock safety system. To deactivate the revolver, you must insert a key over a hexagonal-shaped pin at the rear of the hammer. Turning the key clockwise will raise the pin and its shroud to impinge against the frame if someone attempts to roll the hammer rearward. Turning the key counterclockwise will lower the pin and shroud and permit the hammer to be fully rotated to the rear. This is quite an innovative and effective system. However, no one in my loop will use it, as the most effective safety system of all remains Rule Three (Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target) and the intelligence and training to apply it.

The fixed sights on this revolver consist of a serrated ramp-type front blade, 0.125-inch wide, and an open, square-notch rear sight, 0.130-inch in width, milled into the rear end of the top strap. They are more than adequate for the applications this handgun was designed to cover.

The Hornady 158-grain XTP HP with 14.7 grains of H110 propellant shot 2 inches high and 1 inch to the left in this revolver. Given identical velocities, heavier bullets will always shoot to a higher point of impact than lighter projectiles. If both bullets travel through the barrel at the same velocity, the heavier bullet, which causes greater recoil and thus more muzzle jump, will exit the barrel when it is at a higher angle and will therefore strike higher on the target. Increase the velocity of the lighter bullet and it will leave the barrel faster and before much muzzle climb has taken place. As a result, it will still strike lower on the target. The late General Julian S. Hatcher conducted the classic experiment on this phenomenon, which is described in his book, *Hatcher's Notebook*. As an example

of this, our test specimen shoots to point-of-aim/point-of-impact with the popular 125-grain JHP projectile.

The Model 617 is equipped with black, neoprene-type one-piece grips. They are by now ubiquitous, but I still don't like them. Granted, they help to diminish felt recoil (which is quite moderate with this revolver, mostly as a consequence of its weight). However, they are tacky and it's difficult to re-adjust any error in the firing grip during a draw stroke under the stress associated with a gunfight. They belong on hunting handguns, not fighting pistols. Armed professionals must either learn to handle recoil or move down to a lesser caliber.

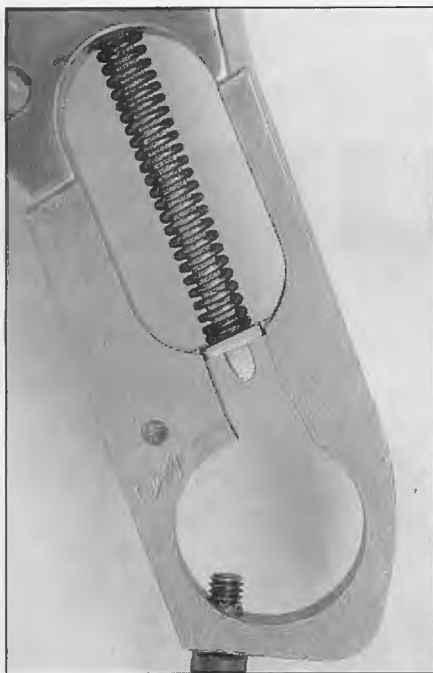
This revolver was tested for accuracy at 7 yards and not mounted on a Ransom rest.



TAURUS M617

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	.357 Magnum.
Operation:	Seven-shot revolver. Single- and double-action. Internal transfer bar safety. Floating firing pin.
Weight, empty:	28.3 ounces.
Length, overall:	6.625 inches.
Barrel:	Five-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 18 3/4 inches. Integral full-length shroud.
Barrel length:	2 inches.
Stocks:	Black, neoprene-type, one-piece.
Sights:	Fixed: serrated ramp-type front blade, 0.125-inch wide, and an open, square-notch rear sight, 0.130-inch in width, milled into the rear end of the top strap.
Finishes:	Blued or stainless steel.
Manufacturer:	Forjas Taurus S.A., Dept. SOF, Av. do Forte, 511 - Cx. Postal 44, 91360-000, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil; phone: 051-347-4000; fax: 051-347-3075.
U.S. distributor:	Taurus International Manufacturing, Inc., Dept. SOF, 16175 N.W. 49th Avenue, Miami, FL 33014; phone: 305-624-1115; fax: 305-623-7506.
T&E summary:	Sturdy and reliable; reasonably priced; adequate accuracy potential; moderate recoil.



Taurus uses a guide-in-coil-type mainspring set into the round-but frame.

Ken Hackathorn once told me that, to his knowledge, no gunfight has ever been documented in which a handgun was mounted in a test fixture. I remain interested only in a firearm's practical accuracy in the hands of one trained to use it properly, not its inherent accuracy in a jig. The vast majority of gunfights with a handgun take place at ranges under (considerably under) 21 feet. What it will do at that range in the hands of a competent shooter is all we need concern ourselves with.

When fired offhand using a strong Weaver position, slow-fire, double-action shooting will produce groups under 3 inches. Picking up the cadence will enlarge the group size — this is as it should be. Shooters should never attempt target accuracy in stress environments. Placing all your shots within the approximately 8x12-inch area of the target's upper torso (commonly referred to as the "center of mass") with as much speed as practical is far more important than obtaining precisely aimed 1-inch groups.

The Model 617 .357 Magnum snubnose we tested is every bit as sturdy and reliable as comparable types. Suggested retail price of the stainless steel version is \$395. The blued variant sells for only \$349. ❧

Product List

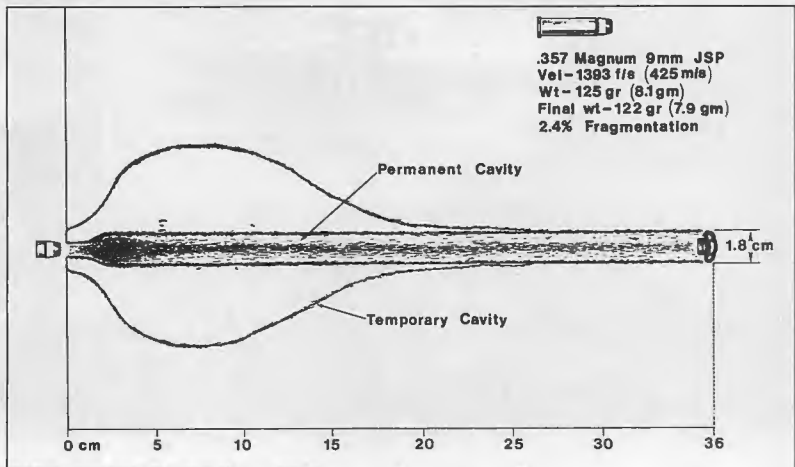
Hornady Manufacturing Company
Dept. SOF
P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68802
phone: 800-338-3220; fax: 308-382-5761

Taurus International Manufacturing, Inc.
Dept. SOF
16175 N.W. 49th Avenue, Miami, FL 33014
phone: 305-624-1115; fax: 305-623-7506

One of the few handgun cartridges to derive its numerical designation from its actual bullet diameter, the .357 Magnum was introduced in 1935 by Smith & Wesson. During the early 1930s, Colonel Douglas B. Wesson of Smith & Wesson and the legendary ballistics authority Philip B. Sharpe conducted experiments with various maximum loads to develop a high-velocity revolver round suitable for *hunting* purposes. Using a Smith & Wesson .38/44 Outdoorsman, they found it to be capable of withstanding what were at that time phenomenal pressures for a revolver (35,000 to 38,000 psi).

This led to a proposed new cartridge designed jointly by Smith & Wesson, DuPont, Hercules and Winchester. The case length was purposely made 1/10-inch longer than that of the .38 Special to preclude use of the .357 Magnum in revolvers chambered for the lower-pressure ammunition. It remained king of the revolver cartridges until introduction of the .44 Magnum in 1955. After more than six decades, interest in the .357 Magnum shows little sign of diminishing.

The History and Performance of the .357 Magnum Cartridge



When it was first introduced in 1935, the .357 Magnum cartridge was reported to deliver a muzzle velocity of 1,510 fps when driven out of the Smith & Wesson 8 3/8-inch barrel. By the 1950s, the U.S. Commercial Standard was 1,450 fps. Original factory ammunition was provided with only three bullet types: a round nose (RN) with a metal point, a solid lead semi-wadcutter (SWC) and a conical-shaped, armor-piercing bullet with a full metal jacket (FMJ). All weighed 158 grains and were essentially nondeforming, but offered excellent penetration.

An incredible aura of mystique surrounded the .357 Magnum cartridge for 20 years after its inception. Although originally designed as a game load, Chester Gould's famous comic-strip character, Dick Tracy, consistently stopped fleeing villains by cracking their engine blocks with his .357 Magnum. It was widely acclaimed as the world's most "powerful" handgun cartridge — whatever that meant. After 60 years, our knowledge of what is actually required to produce effective handgun ammunition has recently grown in an asymptotic manner.

Penetration remains the most important single parameter. The bullet must penetrate deeply enough to crush, cut and break through the human body's vital structures and organs. We need at least 12 inches of penetration through soft tissue and preferably up to 18 inches. Once we have the required penetration, the bullet that makes the biggest hole will do the most damage. Bullets weighing less than 125 grains should not be selected for .357 Magnum combat loads. The most effective bullets in this caliber are those weighing 158 grains. If we can expand a soft-point or hollow-point bullet in this weight range to no more than twice its original diameter and significantly increase the size of the wound track without sacrificing penetration, we're on course to effective performance. Driving such a bullet at the highest possible velocity is certain to be counterproductive, as it will invariably result in over expansion and under penetration.

An excellent example of good bullet design and maximum performance potential is the Hornady (Hornady Manufacturing Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68802; phone: 800-338-3220; fax: 308-382-5761) XTP 158-grain jacketed hollow-point (JHP). SOF tested a handload using this bullet and powered by 14.7 grains of H110 propellant. This combination will drive the bullet out of the Model 617's 2-inch barrel at an average velocity of 1,252 fps, with a standard deviation of only 3.2 fps. That's fast enough and at this velocity the Hornady XTP bullet expands to about .70 caliber and will penetrate up to 15 inches of soft tissue. Overall, this is just about what we're looking for — adequate penetration and reasonable expansion. — P.G.K.

Kosovo

Have Guns,



Harry J. Humphries

Gunning! The word itself rolls smoothly off the tip of the tongue, while the image conjured up is one of adventure and intrigue: John Wayne and Stuart Whitman in *The Comancheros* or William Holden and Robert Ryan in *The Wild Bunch*. It seems there is no end to the world's freedom fighters: American Indians, Mexican revolutionaries, members of former European colonies, or people simply attempting to escape from an oppressive regime — like the one headed up by Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia.

Although it seems there has always been a ready market for weapons, the latter half of the 20th century has been characterized

by armed upheavals everywhere on the planet, which historians will doubtless attribute to the disintegration of the colonial empires, brought to their knees by the debilitating effects of the Second World War and its aftermath. During this period, most of the more powerful nations — the United States, the former Soviet Union and China — provided huge amounts of weaponry to their various puppets and supporters. But, notwithstanding this worldwide deluge of *gratis* military equipment, there has always been a market for the private international arms broker — *Wild Bunch*-style.

As communism in Eastern Europe collapsed, the relative stability it guaranteed — at least on paper — self-destructed along with everything else. Nowhere was this more apparent than in former Yugoslavia and the Balkans. This traditionally volatile region, where East and West have attempted to meet for a thousand years, began to unravel with the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, which was followed immediately by Kosovo's bid for independence (see detailed history in sidebar).

Arms Pipeline

In recent months, *SOF* received reports of an organized pipeline of small arms coming out of Albania and across the border to KLA enclaves in Kosovo, where they were distributed to rebel units. To add spice to this rumor was the implication that one of the legs of the gunrunning operation involved the use of a ferry, since the roads leading to the border are too dangerous to travel,



(insets, above) Finally the "Albanian Queen" ferry arrived from Bajram Curri. Bedlam began as the boat docked and its cargo of cars, vans and trucks all fought their way through the traffic waiting on the landing. The first group of foot passengers boarded in two separate clusters of 10 to 15 men, all closely shaven and cropped; all with military-style back packs walking silently with no inter-crowd discussions. They smelled paramilitary. Humphries and Peck aboard the "Albanian Queen," (at left) Humphries (center), and Mike Peck (right) examine a 7.62x54R Goryunov medium machine gun with an arms dealer in Tropoje.

Will Travel

SOF Trails Gunrunners In Albania

by Col. Mike Peck, USA (Ret.)
Photos by Mark H. Milstein



A KLA fighter, with a generic AK, traverses the rough Kosovo terrain on horseback, on his way back into Albania.

especially to vehicles carrying guns and ammunition.

In an effort to investigate this account, I teamed up with Harry Humphries, a former SEAL and current President of Global Studies Group (GSGI), and Mark Milstein, *SOF's* Chief Foreign Correspondent, a highly experienced combat photographer and reporter. Harry's organization provides training and technical assistance to law-enforcement entities, as well as to Hollywood personalities, and, although we had never met, we were able to recognize each other and link-up in Zurich; he identified me by my wrist compass, and I recognized him because he was wearing and carrying state-of-the-art tactical clothing, footgear, and equipment. Mark met us at the airport and we headed to the Tirana International Hotel to link up with *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown for a planning and strategy session.

We devoted the next two days to meeting with a number of contacts provided by a retired MI colonel I know. He had been a military advisor to Albania for two years, but left when the Albanian army, along with the rest of the government, collapsed in early 1997. During our brief stay in Tirana, we became acclimated to the heat, familiarized ourselves with the overall situation, and explored the question of cross-border gun smuggling with a variety of sources. We discovered little was known in Tirana about the KLA, its leadership, its organization, or its sources of supply. During his sojourn on the Kosovo side a few weeks earlier, Mark learned that a significant source of funding came from *gastarbiters* working in Switzerland, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe. He also learned the going rate for a Kalashnikov was 2,000 *deutsch marks* on the Kosovo side, making it well-worth a smuggler's effort.

We decided it warranted a first-hand look, so we again used our contacts to secure the services of an interpreter known as "Henry,"



Mike Peck (foreground) waiting to board the "Albanian Queen" ferry. To the left, with their backs turned to the camera, are two paramilitary types getting ready to board the ferry on a trip up country. The two men, and the rest of their group, says Humphries, "were distinctively different from most. They stayed aloof and separate. My guess? Ex-pats coming back to join the fight."

who was intelligent, courageous, and very street-smart — traits you need when dealing with former communists who nod their heads to mean "no," and shake their heads from side to side to mean "yes."

The Guerrilla Ferry

Early Sunday morning, after two eventful days and nights in Tirana, we took leave of Brown — who spent the next several days recovering from the effect of eating raw squid in a "bad" Italian restaurant in Albania. Unfortunately, our driver did not show, but Mark and Henry were able to hire another car and driver right off the street with the promise of a cash payment in U.S. dollars. Although he had no kit or even a change of clothes, "Minor" (the phonetic pronunciation of our driver's name) agreed to depart immediately, so we piled our equipment and ourselves into his Mercedes 240 sedan. We had to

hustle since the ferry was scheduled to arrive at roughly 1100 hours and depart whenever it was loaded. Although private ownership of automobiles was banned until 1991, the roads were surprisingly good, at least between Tirana and Lezhë, where we had to leave the main highway and continue on secondary roads. The countryside itself was relatively grim, littered with the wrecks of gutted and



(above) Businessmen were busy setting up "shop" in Tropoje, prepping their odd collections of weapons, uniforms, boots, patches and supplies for the steady trickle of wannabe guerrilla fighters making their way to Kosovo from as far away as Switzerland and Germany. SOF team member and former Navy SEAL Harry Humphries (kneeling near an RPD LMG 7.62x39mm) raps with customers at one such market. The

dealer in camouflage displays a Type 56. (above, right) KLA guerrilla, armed with an StG 57 7.5x55mm Swiss Service Rifle (lending evidence to the purported Switzerland/Albania weapon pipeline), on standby in Kosovo. A KLA victory and the emergence of an Albanian super-state — created by the economic, political and social linking of Kosovo and Albania — could send tremors throughout the Balkans.

decaying state factories — silent, monolithic monuments to the folly of centralized government planning and control.

The farther we progressed up-country, however, the more scenic it became, although the otherwise bucolic vista was marred by the inescapable presence of the ubiquitous reinforced concrete bunkers which were scattered, seemingly at random, wherever you looked. Their rounded domes and unsmiling firing slits gave the appearance of thousands of half-buried R2D2 robots, balefully staring out over the land in blank testimony to the incredible paranoia and stupidity of Enver Hoxha and his satraps.

The indestructible Mercedes carried us up a gravel secondary road to the Chinese-built dam which forms the southern end of the lake on the Drin River. Apparently the ferry landing was an afterthought, or a make-work project, since the Chinese engineers decided to provide access by carving a gradually ascending tunnel through the side of the mountain, which wound around for almost a kilometer and finally opened onto the lake several hundred meters behind the dam itself. We managed to arrive with time to spare, and while surveying the scene attempted to look nonchalant and unobtrusive.

As more and more passengers and “businessmen” showed up, however, we were generally lost in the crowd, since the assemblage filtering onto the quay was, let’s just say, an eclectic-looking bunch.

As the arrival of the ferry became more imminent, the smaller dealers began to bring out their wares: Chinese variants of the AK-47 assault rifle, semiautomatic SKS carbines, RPG launchers and rockets, and Tokarev-type pistols from a variety of sources. The transfers took place completely out in the open, where rifles were purchased one at a time by individuals or in man-portable lots, wrapped up in burlap sacks or sheets of plastic with an occasional rocket launcher mixed in. We did not detect a volume trade in pistols, although some might have been included in the weapons bundles. The handguns, all of which were Tokarev knock-offs, were seemingly purchased by private individuals and subsequently slipped into pockets or tucked into waist bands. There were a number of small trucks and Mercedes sedans sitting heavily on their springs which remained apart and aloof from the open transfers. Since there was no way to inspect or otherwise verify the contents of these vehicles, whose drivers and “shotguns” seemed neither friendly nor talkative, we assumed these were the larger

dealers who had volume buyers awaiting them on the other end. Mark was busy snapping photos, and except for one surly character, most of the buyers and sellers were totally unconcerned, viewing us more out of curiosity than animosity.

Ferry Boat Pandemonium

A mob scene ensued when the ferry arrived, at about 1130, with insufficient space for the orderly unloading and loading of the boat. Last minute deals were made amidst the pandemonium, and finally the situation unsnarled itself with nothing more untoward than shouting and horn-blowing. It is amazing how polite people can be when every other person is sporting an automatic rifle. Among the embarking passengers was a tight group of about 20 young men, all with close-cropped hair, carrying various *ersatz* versions of duffle bags. They appeared directed, disciplined and determined, reminding me of the kids who showed up at Camp Alpha in a different war at a different time. Some were even wearing uniforms or uniform items, while others were carrying military packs and equipment, most of which appeared to be of German origin.

Although no one seemed to feel the need to test-fire any of the Kalashnikovs, a number of clients conducted function-firing drills with their newly-acquired Tokarevs. In fact, the first such test to be initiated was performed by the uniformed policeman who was watching over the entire process from behind the protective aegis of the Albanian version of aviator sunglasses. Presumably he was there to lend a bit of order and dignity to the process. He took time out from his taciturn scrutiny of the mob to give a neophyte an impromptu class on the loading and manipulation of a TT-33, which he fired several times in the air to ensure proper functioning. Once official authorization had been granted, several more pistoleros began banging away at the hundreds of cans and bottles bobbing in the water, like decoys to attract and encourage littering.

After man-handling the last few vehicles on board to make them fit, and amid the flurry of eleventh-hour cash and carry arms exchanges, the ferry backed away from shore, with people still jumping off the ramp, and got underway. Because he more resembles a pirate than a former Navy SEAL, Harry was able to infiltrate into a group of passengers located topside, where he soon began to communicate in excellent German. He confirmed that what we had witnessed was an every day occurrence, and found

KLA Sitrep

In several orientation meetings with reliable contacts in Tirana, *SOF* came to the following conclusions:

- The Albanian government does not see a clearly defined political leadership within the KLA with which to deal.

- There does not appear to be a central command, control or communication function within the paramilitary element.

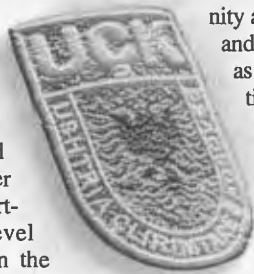
- There appears to be no training for the troops, which are basically a rag-tag fighting element with no sense of organized resistance on a regional or larger level. Troops tend to be compartmentalized into the family level fighting element so prominent in the Kosovo region where inter-family blood feuds are a way of life. That is to say the family level concept or village-level reactionary units prevail and the reported large units are an aggregate of several volunteer units coming together much like multi-alarm fires are fought by volunteer fire departments.

- While it’s widely known that support funds are channeled through Switzerland, there is only conjecture as to the ultimate

source or sources of these funds. It is generally accepted that there is a preponderance of contributions coming from the Albanian/Kosovo, ex-patriot community at large in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. There is also conjecture as to an organized crime contribution. While not evident there may be national level support coming from other separatist states wishing to pull away from Milosevic’s Yugoslavia (Montenegro, for example).

- While there seems to be an escalating awareness and empathy for their ethnic cousins in Kosovo, the average Albanian cares little for the activity in Kosovo. (Although it should be mentioned that several pro KLA banners were seen hanging on public buildings in Tirana.

- The Albanian government is perhaps gun shy of a reinforced and well trained Albanian Kosovo KLA, as these people tend to enjoy the fight and may wish to pur-



sue “a Greater Albanian Kosovo.”

- The Albanian government in power today is even worse than the one recently replaced. The Tirana Government controls only the central portion of the country. The south is not under Tirana control and the northern region is totally without law and order and considers itself autonomous from Tirana.

- Colonel Boob Si, former head of intelligence with the Albanian army during the reign of the Democratic Party under Sali Berisha, is adamant there’s only one answer to the situation in Kosovo. He advocates immediate U.S., NATO, or U.N. involvement. The fighting must stop immediately, he says, and the KLA must be disarmed and a negotiated truce should be pursued under strong supervision from the U.S. Boob Si does not see need for an autonomous Kosovo, but does see validity in an elected choice of an Albanian/Kosovar republic. He cautions Albania and Kosovo are presently incapable of managing their own affairs, let alone the problems of unitizing both countries. It is therefore imperative that a strong support program be implemented to help Albania to help itself first, before it can as a nation help the Kosovar government should it ever come to be.

— Harry J. Humphries

that the downstream price of a Kalashnikov was about \$200, while an SKS would fetch about half that. The Tokarevs were pricey, selling for \$400 dollars each, which included one spare magazine and a 36-round box of 7.62x25mm ball. In addition, a good deal of ordnance in the form of small-arms ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, pineapple-type hand grenades, and assorted mines and explosives were also aboard, stowed away, as suspected, in the low-slung vehicles.

The mountains and scenery were worth the price of admission — very rugged and unspoiled. The lake, unfortunately, was marred by all the non-biodegradable detritus that had been dumped into it, much of which was floating on the surface. The landing at Fierzë was slightly more organized, and we were soon on our way to Bajram-Cirri (pronounced Byrum-Surry). The road paralleling the Drin River, which fed the lake, was cut out of the mountain side and had no guard rails other than at some of the stone bridges. If you had a blow-out, missed a turn, or were forced off the road it was about 1,000 feet to the bottom in most places. Minor, our driver, did not seem intimidated, though, and barreled along at warp speed, using his horn more than his brakes. At about 1800 hours we arrived at our destination, a scenic little town which could be turned into a resort with a little effort, and checked into the Ermal Hotel, where the only registration and ID required was an up-front cash payment.

Damned Flying Rats

Although the rooms were primitive, as were the sanitary facilities — flushed with buckets of water dipped from a 55-gallon drum — there was a shower, which actually had a trickle of hot water. In addition, the food at the hotel restaurant was surprisingly good — and the beer (Castello, brewed in Italy) was ice cold.

The only real downer was that the place was infested with bats, and we were informed that a group of Germans had suffered multiple bites a few days before. I once took up lodging (on a table) at an abandoned military base back in the SpecOps days with an extended family of puff adders that used to come out at night and knot together like a scene from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. I later shared a hooch with a mamba in South Africa. Also, dur-

ing my sojourn at Fire Support Base Barbara in 1971, the rats in the bunkers were as big as racoons — and mean. But flying rats ... No thanks! Also, Albania was too close to Transylvania for my blood (so to speak).

Having battled obviously hungry leeches during numerous outings in rice paddies and swarms of starving mosquitoes in unpronounceable places all my life, I have developed a real aversion to things that suck my blood. Harry felt the same, and since we were sharing a room, we decided to keep the windows closed. Although we were at a relatively high altitude, it was still hot as hell. Besides, the popping of small arms fire all night made us feel at home. Of course, we discovered the next morning that a bat had found its way in anyway. The little bugger scuttled out behind Harry on the way to the shower, as if he was ready to be taken for his morning walk. Oh, well ...

Harry had made contact on the ferry with a dealer who had offered to take us to an arms bazaar. Unfortunately, he didn't show and we were unable to contact him. After about an hour we decided to head out on our own to a place called Tropojë (pronounced Troh-poy'-ya), the last town on the way to the border. Our sources, including Harry's contact, had advised us this was the site of an open-air arms market. Since there was no sign of arms trafficking in Bajram-Curri, and the "recruits" we saw on the ferry had disappeared, we headed off to Tropojë. We arrived at about 1000 and, sure enough, "Guns R Us," right in the town square.

We had previously been advised not to take any photos without permission, so Mark and I wandered around looking at things

while attempting to find out who in the group spoke German. Henry and Harry, in the meantime, were chatting up the locals in a disarming fashion and were obviously winning their confidence. While we were casually checking out the wares of one seller — AKs; Chinese Type 56 (SKS) carbines; Chinese Type 63 selective-fire carbines (the later version with the stamped dust cover); PPSH-41s; a Goryunov medium machine gun in 7.62x54mm; rocket launchers; TT-33 (K-51) pistols; grenades; ammunition; uniforms; and equipment — one of the vendors asked Mark, covered with cameras, to snap his picture. Once the offer had been made, we all began to pho-



Weapons transfers took place completely out in the open, where rifles were purchased one at a time by individuals or in man-portable lots, wrapped up in burlap sacks or sheets of plastic — in this case an RPG wrapped in a sheet.

Harry J. Humphreys

A Historical Glance

When Slobodan Milosevic came to power and began promoting the concept of Greater Serbia, the stage was set for the final disintegration of the agglomeration of disparate republics that had been held together primarily by Tito's stature and even-handedness. In 1987, Mr. Milosevic proclaimed to the Serbian minority in Kosovo that they were the new masters of the land, then set about featherbedding most of the government jobs to ethnic Serbs. In 1989, riots again broke out in Kosovo when Belgrade placed strict limitations on its status as an autonomous province. This led to the armed defection of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, followed by Bosnia in 1992. It appeared that the frustration engendered by the successful exodus from the federation by Croatia and Slovenia was taken out on the hapless Bosnians in the form of racially motivated "ethnic cleansing." Now, the same cast of unrepentant characters

that brought officially-sanctioned looting, rape, and murder to Bosnia is replicating that benevolent effort in Kosovo.

When the Boys from Belgrade revoked Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, a clandestine shadow government was installed by the ethnic Albanians, who at the same time formed the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Nine years later, having grown tired of Serbian heavy-handedness — and separated by vast differences in religion, culture and language from their would-be masters — the Kosovars are again pressing for total independence. Out of a population of almost 2 million, 90% of the Kosovars are ethnically Albanian, which means they are predominantly Muslim. The unofficial "Kosovo Government," headed-up by Ibrahim Rugova generally advocates accommodation, dialog, and non-violence — something only vaguely understood by Milosevic and

his lieutenants, if at all. The KLA has recently raised the stakes, however, and, true to form, the Serbians have responded in their usual fashion.

As was the case in Bosnia, the Serbians have all the firepower, since they were heir to the arsenals of the former Yugoslavia. Also, for all of their ethical shortcomings, they are well organized and obviously have a plan, something which seems lacking in the KLA. Nevertheless, the Kosovars are gamely resisting the Serb advances and the "cleansing" of their towns and villages with a heterogeneous array of light weapons. Although the chaos and disorder which seem to have become the norm throughout the former Yugoslavia have permitted a general proliferation of small arms, there would hardly be enough contraband Kalasnikovs in circulation in Kosovo to mount an effective resistance. — M.P.

tograph as much as we dared, attempting to be as casual as we could about it, while Mark struck up conversations with several former *gastarbeiters* in his perfect German. While we were thus engaged, several young men emerged from a house on the other side of the street carrying their offerings, which they laid out along the side of the road.

We all wandered over to check it out. In general the weapons on display were all replications of what we had seen before, with the exception of a well-worn, but serviceable, WWII-vintage MP-40 sub-machine gun in 9x19mm caliber and a PPS-43. A "transportation surcharge" had been added to the prices, so the cost of an AK or SKS was generally double what it had been before the ferry ride; the same for pistols, which were now selling for \$800. Interestingly enough, that was also what they wanted for the tripod-mounted machine gun. Apparently, as in most other places, pistols were considered status symbols — for which you had to pay.

The Gift Of A Grenade

Our abandonment of his "shop" obviously annoyed the guy across the street. To subtly and diplomatically signal his displeasure, he rolled the Chinese version of a Soviet F1 hand grenade into the group, which included about a dozen locals. I started to kick it down the street, but saw that it had no fuse assembly and had been tossed "as a joke". There was a certain amount of indignant shouting, voicing the Albanian equivalent of, "T'ain't funny, McGee!", but no one appeared overly upset and it blew over immediately.

As we meandered back over to Pineapple Pete's Place, a mule train showed up, explaining how the larger shipments went over the mountain. Mark was able to get several good shots of this ancient, but efficient, means of all-terrain transport.

Just as we were congratulating ourselves on our good fortune, things suddenly went sour. What turned out later to be a plainclothes policeman showed up and began to threaten us, declaring that our presence, in general, and our photographs, in specific, posed a significant threat to the town, the arms market, the vendors, and the Albanian way of life. He was shouting accusations and denunciations, making it quite obvious that he was inciting the group of about 35 armed men to violence. Five (including Henry and Minor) against 35, are not fun odds. Our own weaponry was limited and primarily for in-close application. So while Harry and Henry attempted to reason with the instigator, I moved over to the assault rifle street display, which had been arrayed on a small berm. I knew at least one of the Kalasnikovs was loaded since I had checked it out, and there was a pile of loaded magazines within reach. Even so, our chances of getting out of there with everyone intact were not all that great. And while the mob that was forming lacked any organization, there were simply too many automatic rifles around and we were too deep into Indian country to E&E back without experiencing significant unpleasantness. Just as things were about to take a real turn for the ugly, a group of uniformed police arrived.

They had a calming effect on the crowd, but the plainclothes cop continued to rant and rave. Even with their arrival, I continued to mentally rehearse options and actions to various contingencies which I could imagine — none of which were good. Finally, with the assistance of one of the uniformed policemen, Henry and Harry, whose combined coolness saved the day, we were eventually able to smooth things over. To justify his actions, the plainclothes man then claimed that his only complaint was that we "did not have permission" to be in the area, which seemed hardly an offense punishable by a murderous mob.

Once the noisy cop shut up, like the grenade incident, everything

quickly returned to normal, and Harry was able to negotiate safe passage back to Bajram-Curri to secure the "proper authorization." Mark promised to return with developed photographs for all and sundry, while I continued to mentally plan a covering action to buy enough surprise and time to let everyone get into the car and out of the immediate area, with the idea of cutting loose a horse and following *à la* Tom Mix. Even after everyone had begun to calm down, I continued to loiter close to the stash of AKs. By the time we left, everyone was friendly and hospitable again.

We were lucky. One only need to remember most of these people were recently made displaced persons, having lost homes, family and country to the Serb enemy. We were being portrayed as the enemy. Thank you very much "organizations for the Security and Cooperation in Europe Presence in Albania," or OSCE. There is no doubt, says Humphries, the OSCE is responsible for initiating what could have been a very nasty situation.

Surmises Humphries: "These people have no remaining charter in the area and are looking to preserve their bureaucratic fat asses in the Kosovar Albanian region."

We returned to Bajram-Curri and reported to the police station, as promised. Henry was reluctant to go in by himself, so Harry, in his usual "persuasive" manner, accompanied him and was successful in defusing the situation once again. In fact, the police chief was so impressed he accepted Harry's invitation to dinner at the hotel. He also arranged for us to meet with Mr. Taulant Dedja, the director general for local government from the Ministry of the Interior, who had been dispatched to coordinate refugee and humanitarian efforts in the border area.

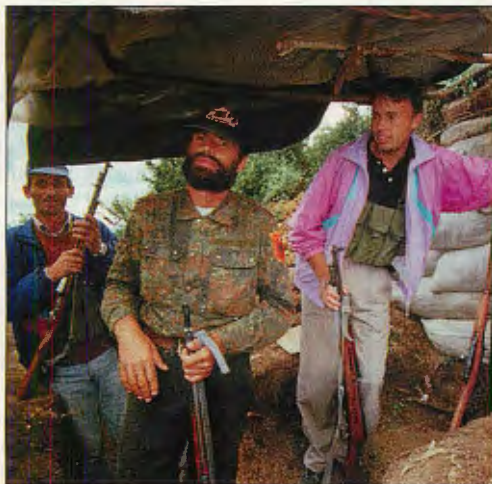
More sporadic gunfire could be heard in the distance as the afternoon wore on, and just before dusk there was a flurry of pistol shots followed by several bursts from an automatic rifle in the town about 200 hundred yards away. Apparently, a vehicle had attempted to run a road block or routine check, and the police had fired warning shots. As always, things returned to normal almost immediately. During dinner with the Bajram-Curri Police Chief and Taulant Dedja, we were invited to accompany an official party which was leaving the next day to verify reports of Serbian border violations north of Tropojë, and, of course, we agreed to go.

Border Ambushes

The next day we linked-up with the official party and drove as far as practical, then dismounted to continue on foot. Six Albanian citizens had recently been killed by Serbian snipers who had come across the border and set up ambushes on the trail leading to a crossing site. For this reason we left the vehicles in a hide position and went up a footpath which offered a concealed approach. Even though our

hosts had indicated that the hike would take approximately two and a half hours, I optimistically set off with a 30-pound rucksack full of equipment, while Mark elected to carry all of his camera equipment (even though he'd almost had his foot blown off by a grenade in Sarajevo a couple of years back).

Harry, as usual, had the latest in adventure gear and looked ready for anything. He and I alternated carrying the ruck for about the first kilometer, which was a vertical ascent up a hairpin goat trail. When it became apparent that we were just getting started, I finally got smart and attached it to the packhorse that accompanied us. That first kilometer hurt, though. We were approaching a point in the Albanian Alps with an altitude of 2,656 meters A.S.L. and had only one day to acclimate. That, plus the fact I had not made a similar march since French Commando School *Stage Officier* back in



The KLA trenches, as pictured here, are a stark contrast to the offices, good jobs and security most of the guerrillas gave up to fight. "I had to," said a guerrilla explaining why he uprooted his life to fight in Kosovo. "If I didn't come back to save my father's house, who would?" Each guerrilla holds an SKS (Type 56) 7.62 x 39mm carbine. Leaned against the sandbags is a Chinese Moisin Nagant 7.62x54R bolt action.

Continued on page 71

Omega Ground

by Don McLean



Gerber Sport Saw

Testing Gerber products makes one wish he were outfitting an expedition. Their "little" 6-inch Sport Saw is a case in point. Don't know just what sport entails sawing 6-inch logs, but this mighty-mite will do it with aplomb. At a minuscule 4 ounces, the Sport Saw will get lost in your pack or on your belt in its comfortable nylon pouch, but it is a serious tool. Precisely engineered to do hard work at the bare minimum of weight, this is the sort of gear you'd want to take along on a lunar mission just in case there might be trees. Barring that, take it on whatever may be your own next excellent adventure, as you'll never notice the extra four ounces.

It comes with interchangeable coarse or fine double-cut stainless steel blades: A double-cut pattern cuts on the push *and/or* pull stroke. Cutting on the pull stroke like a Japanese carpenter's saw affords very good control with a short blade. The blades came as sharp as any competition cross-cut I ever saw, and they stayed that way through a variety of green and cured hardwoods, and even through a certain amount of creative abuse. The nominal 6-inch coarse blade has about a seven-point pattern, ground like an old buck saw but without raker teeth. We cut up 6-inch seasoned oak with it at the last *SOF* barbecue and barely broke a sweat. On wet, green wood one had a tendency to keep looking for the fuel gauge as it flat-out cuts green wood like a power saw.

During the creative-abuse segment of the test we used the finer tooth blade on some aluminum shapes and castings, and it still cut hardwood better than most new hand saws. The fine tooth is designed, of course, for bone: the only bone at hand was dry (as a bone) and hard, yet the Sport Saw cut it better than any bow-type butcher's saw we ever used. We gave it a light touch-up with a fine slip, and it was ready for some more creative abuse. The good news is, the blades (for replacement or mission spares) are available open stock so you never need to run dull. The blades change in seconds and lock up solidly.

The handle is made from the same glass-filled polyamid as their axe handles, and it has an appropriate and comfortable Kraton rubber palm insert. A good saw — or in this case an excellent saw — has a stealth advantage over an axe for cutting wood because there is no impact involved, and there are times you need to cut wood where is it difficult to swing an axe or hatchet. Whatever your mission, this implement will make the cut.

Gerber Legendary Blades, Dept. *SOF*, 14200 S.W. 72nd Ave., Portland, OR 97281.

First-Class First Aid

If you're one of the Good Guys — as in cop, paramedic, fireman, mountain or pararescue types — you owe it to the people you serve to carry the best emergency medical gear. If you hunt or travel in harm's way, you owe it to yourself to carry similar provisions. Pro Med Kits makes a full line of easy-to-have-with-you medical kits from pocket-packs for hunters to a SpecOps Pro Pack currently in

use by USAF PJs and police tactical assault teams.

Designed by a former pararescueman, each of these packs is constructed for easy carry, yet fast and efficient use when required. Each is filled with the gear and supplies you are most apt to need — not whatever supplies were available cheap on the surplus market.

The Hunter's Pocket II First Aid Kit (upper left) has nearly 60 items for the treatment of minor injuries and ailments, including a mini first-aid guide. It is carried in a coat-pocket-size rigid synthetic box.

The Pro Med Mini Pouch Kit (lower left) is about twice the size of the old GI "First Aid Pouch" that contained a single field dressing, but it contains more than 40 items for first-aid requirements when traveling, hunting, or other outdoor activities.

The Battle Pack (right) is a well-stocked trauma pack that can be used to treat most life-threatening injuries, coming completely stocked with enough trauma supplies to cover a wide variety of wounds. Mounted on either leg or the duty belt, the Battle Pack does not hinder movement. The immediate-access pull-down panel



unzips quickly so trauma supplies can be easily removed from their elastic retaining bands and used.

A full line of these excellent kits, plus resupplies, are available from Pro Med Kits, Dept. SOF, 216 F Street, Suite 152, Davis, CA 95612; phone: 800-776-5310; check out their web site at <http://www.promedkits.com> for other recommended gear.

Military Bolo

We bought our first Kukri from an antique store, at the age of 12 with strawberry-picking money. It was made by an unknown but highly skilled native bladesmith and came to the States as a war souvenir. Although we were careful to keep it out of the dirt, we used it for chopping chores for three decades and it never dulled to the point we had to sharpen it, and it taught us early on of the benefits from a forward-swept, weight-forward design on a chopper. The lines of Gutman's Military Bolo remind one more of a Kukri than of the forged U.S. "bolo" machetes from WWII, and that's fine with this bushwhacker because it has better reach, the weight is just where we want it, and the forward-swept blade profile puts the wrist



at a comfortable angle when the iron hits the target.

The Military Bolo is not a lightweight weed-and-vine whacker, but a serious chopper nearly as substantial as a Kukri although with more reach than most. We felled a 6-inch green tree, and the occasional oops into rocky soil did not bugger the blade. The depth of the blade made easy such tasks as trimming limbs flush with the pole. It came as sharp as you'd like for whacking overhead, and after an arduous test session a diamond hone brought it right back to no time.

This blade is made in Seki from AUS-8 stainless, features a secure-wet checkered Kraton grip on the full-tang handle, a matte Teflon coating, and it displayed the same quiet "stealth" phenomenon as their Short Sword when chopping through hard, dry limbs in a single pass. Although scarred as one would expect, the tough Teflon stayed in place throughout the tests. Spruce pitch came off in a single pass with a solvent rag. The top of the blade is sharpened for the first few inches, giving an advantage for such duties as digging into down logs for a squirmy snack, or using it as a weapon. The face of the blade is not sharpened all the way to the hilt, which we would like to see as it would make it more handy in a traditional knife role.

An ample lanyard hole (large enough for 550 cord, thank you) is in the butt. It comes in a riveted Kydex sheath with a snap strap. Any time you need a Kukri *and* a machete along but can't ration the weight for both, this tool will serve you well: Some very diplomatic design compromises will give you the best of both, and the quality materials and workmanship will deliver hard-use service.

Available from Gutman Cutlery, Dept. SOF, Box 2219, Bellingham, WA 98227; phone: 360-650-9141; fax: 360-676-1075.

Colt Trailblazer Knife-Axe Combo

As you will recall from past issues, the Colt name, synonymous with more than a century of top-quality firearms, now appears on a line of knives distributed by United Cutlery. Included in this line is a handy and serviceable knife-axe combination tool. Like early Colt revolvers made abroad, although made in Taiwan this is a quality item worthy of the Colt name and certainly worthy of your consideration as a camp or trail companion. Light yet solid because of its glass-filled synthetic handle, the Trailblazer takes advantage of the unused space inside the hollow handle to carry a 4-inch stainless-steel knife, retained by a spring-loaded detent. This clever and handy camp knife is not in the least in the way — and it's one less thing to remember to pack.

The checkered synthetic handle gives a secure but not abrasive grip, and the tapered stainless steel head is securely inletted into and surrounded by the handle material. It will not dry out and fall out as can wood; yet it is not heavy as a steel shank. The straight taper of the blade comes to a nicely radiused face, in a profile easy to maintain with a pocket stone.

It comes in a black leather and ballistic nylon belt sheath, which has a pocket for a stone or similar appurtenances. An excellent trail companion, or a worthy item to keep in your transport machine.

United Cutlery Brands, Dept. SOF, 1425 United Blvd., Sevierville, TN 37876; phone: 423-428-2532; fax: 423-428-2267.



South African R.A.P. 440 Pistol

As the government of South Africa is now politically correct, we can expect to occasionally see a few token firearms make it through the maze of anti-gun import regulations established by the Clinton administration. The first to successfully march through this labyrinth is a sturdy compact .40 S&W pistol manufactured by Republic Arms, a subsidiary of Hausler Scientific. With its roots in pre-war Germany, Hausler is world-renowned for their high-precision products in optics, nuclear energy, aviation and weaponry. Our test specimen is a .40 S&W version of the 9mm Parabellum pistol now the standard concealed-carry handgun of the South African police.

More than a little reminiscent of the Spanish Astra A-75, the RAP 440 (Republic Arms Pistol - Model 440) however, is well beyond a mere copy. The method of operation is locked-breach, short recoil. It employs a conventional cam-dropped barrel system, with a squared-off area above the barrel chamber locking into the slide's ejection port in the manner pop-



ularized by the SIG Sauer P226.

As it is of all 4140 steel construction, including the frame, the R.A.P. 440 tips the scales at 31.5 ounces, somewhat heavy for a compact handgun envelope by today's standards. However, the trade-off is enhanced durability. The barrel length is 3.5 inches. The slide and frame have a semi-gloss appearance, except for the top of the slide which has a matte surface to reduce glare. Most of the steel components carry a black oxide finish.

The capacity of the single-line magazine is seven rounds. It drops freely away when released by the magazine catch/release, located on the frame to the rear of the trigger guard. The front of the trigger guard is squared-off and checkered.

The spring-loaded extractor, exposed on the right side of the slide in a manner introduced by the Browning High Power in 1962, pivots on an axis retaining pin. The firing pin, also spring-loaded, is held in place by a retaining pin under the rear sight and is not intended to be removed by the operator. It cannot travel fully forward until its spring-loaded safety plunger is pushed upward by a lever attached to the sear bar when the trigger is pulled. There is also a hammer-drop safety.

A conventional single-coil recoil spring is wrapped around a full-length aluminum guide rod. The slide holds no barrel bushing as a prominent raised ring around the muzzle interfaces with a hole in the front of the slide.

The "grip-to-frame angle," defined as the angle presented

Continued on page 70



South African R.A.P. 440 Pistol

RAP 440 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .40 S&W.

Operation: Locked-breach, short recoil. Decocker lever also serves as a manual safety.

Weight, empty: 31.5 ounces.

Length, overall: 6.5 inches.

Height: 4.75 inches.

Width, at the grips: 1.25 inches.

Barrel length: 3.5 inches.

Magazine: Seven-round, single-column, detachable box-type with removable base pad and floorplate.

Sights: Fixed front blade with a single white dot and open square-notch rear with two white dots. Low-profile with rounded edges.

Finish: Black oxide.

Furniture: Black synthetic grip panels.

Suggested price: \$545.

Importer: TSF Ltd., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 830, Fairfax, VA 22030; phone: 703-385-0889; fax: 703-385-4655.

Colonel Rex Applegate

1914-1998

On 14 July 1998, America lost one of its greatest warriors and finest gentlemen.

On that day in San Diego, California, Colonel Rex Applegate died from the effects of a stroke complicated by pneumonia. He was 84.

Colonel Rex Applegate was born on 21 June 1914 in the small town of Yoncolla, Oregon. The great-grandson of Charles Applegate, one of the original pioneers on the Oregon Trail, "The Colonel" was born into a proud family tradition of self-sufficiency, patriotism, and skill at arms. He developed a passion for guns at an early age and learned to shoot at the hands of his uncle, Gus Peret, an expert marksman and professional exhibition shooter for the Remington Peters Cartridge Company.

After earning a degree and an ROTC commission at the University of Oregon, Applegate entered active duty in 1939 and was assigned to the Military Police Corps. In March 1942, following a promotion to first lieutenant and the receipt of a Regular Army commission, he was summoned to Washington, D. C. for a personal interview with then-Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan. As the Director of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), Donovan had been tasked with establishing a new organization to train and deploy intelligence operatives, saboteurs and assassins in support of the Allied war effort. He was impressed with Applegate and immediately selected him as the primary trainer for his new unit. With that assignment came the order to "learn everything there is to know in the world about close combat with and without weapons," a task that ultimately became the young lieutenant's life's work.

By mid-1942, the COI was renamed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and Applegate was organizing a top-secret training camp in the Maryland countryside. The camp, known simply as "Area B," was adjacent to President Roosevelt's "Shangri-la," which later became Camp David. Because of this proximity and the constant presence of heavily armed personnel in Area B, Applegate was also made part of the presidential camp bodyguard for FDR.

While assigned to Area B, Applegate became an expert in all facets of close combat, including hand-to-hand fighting, knife fighting, weapon disarming, and combat shooting with handguns and shoulder weapons. He worked closely with W.E. Fairbairn and E.A. Sykes, veterans of the Shanghai Municipal Police and trainers of the British Commandos, and developed advanced training facilities and teaching methods that rival today's state of the art. He and the other members of his staff also frequently participated in field combat operations to ensure that the methods they taught would work on the battlefields.

During his tour of duty at Area B and a later assignment at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Maryland,

Applegate taught literally thousands of U.S. and Allied operatives the skills necessary to survive and kill on the battlefield. He also compiled these lessons in the form of his landmark book *Kill Or Get Killed*, the classic text on close combat that is now in its 29th printing.

At the end of World War II, Col. Applegate retired from the military and moved to Mexico City, where he served as president of an arms-importing company. At the request of the Mexican government, he also applied his considerable talents toward the field of riot control and soon became the world's foremost authority on this specialty.

The Colonel remained in Mexico until the early 1960s, when he was asked to return to the U.S. to help quell our own civil distur-

bances. He advised many state and federal agencies on the strategy and tactics of riot control and also authored the definitive text on this subject.

As a devoted student of close-combat tactics, Col. Applegate realized that the real-world lessons he had learned during World War II were still relevant in the latter half of this century. He therefore began efforts to share this knowledge and adapt it to the needs of various military and police agencies. The Colonel wrote numerous articles for law-enforcement publications and authored several more books. He became involved in the design of edged weapons, taking steps to produce the Applegate-Fairbairn Fighting knife he and Fairbairn had conceived near the end of the war, as well as several other outstanding designs. A staunch supporter of the Second Amendment, Col. Applegate also served on the NRA Board of Directors and was a recipient of

the coveted Outstanding American Handgunner Award.

His greatest passion, however, was the promotion of point shooting (an unsighted method of fire that relies on a person's innate ability to point accurately) as the most tactically sound method of employing a handgun in a close-quarter gunfight.

Disgusted with the dismal failure of so-called "modern" shooting techniques in actual gunfights, he became a vocal proponent of point shooting and its battle-proven record. The Colonel's efforts not only resulted in numerous lectures, articles, books and videos on this topic, they produced a number of changed minds in the firearms training community. In fact, Col. Applegate was preparing to speak to a conference of California law-enforcement officers in an effort to have point shooting adopted as their state training standard when he suffered the stroke that ultimately took his life.

Colonel Rex Applegate was a warrior, mentor, gentleman, and friend. He leaves behind a legacy of battle-tested knowledge, that will save lives for generations to come, and the treasured memories of those of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

—Michael Janich ✕



I have as many reasons to be modest as anybody (ask any of my old SEAL buddies), and one of them is a fellow Texan named B.G. "Jug" Burkett. Let me explain what I mean.

SOF readers might recall two articles I wrote about guys who falsely claimed to be SEALs (November '94 and July '95). Frankly, I got a lot of satisfaction exposing those low-living, sewer-crawling vermin, and I dealt with fewer than a dozen! Imagine how I felt when I ran across a guy who has made book on more than 1,000 frauds: It was humbling, to say the least.

That's right — Jug Burkett has proved that more than 1,000 men who claimed to be Vietnam heroes were phonies. Either they were never in Vietnam, they didn't do what they claimed to do, they didn't receive the awards they bragged about, or, *all of the above*. He did it the hard way, one at a time, through the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

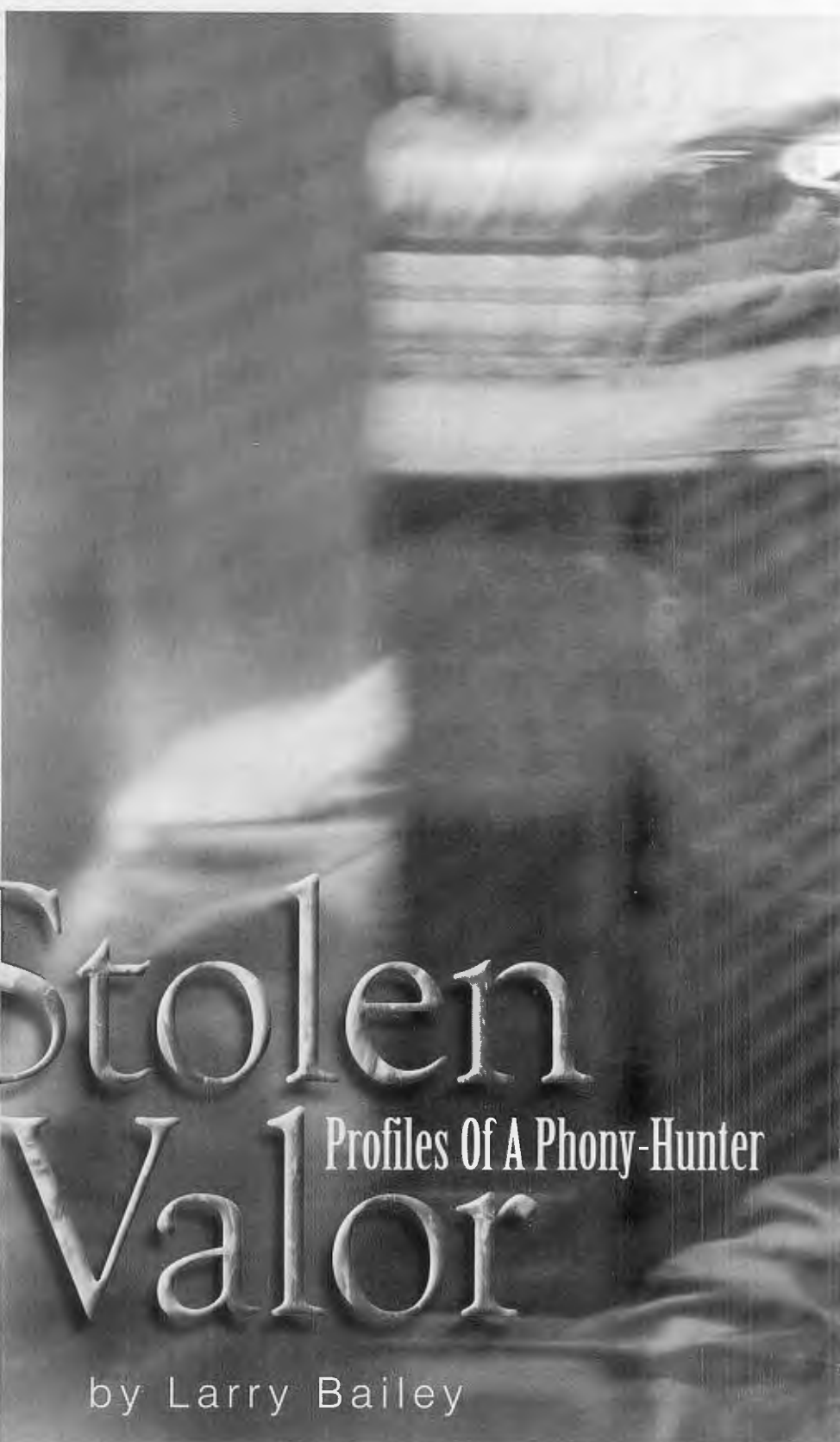
But I got ahead of myself. Let's start from the beginning, when Burkett first "got inspired" to set the record straight about who and what Vietnam veterans really are. The setting was the Texas State Fair grounds in Dallas; the occasion was a news conference called by Burkett (who was the fund-raising co-chair) to publicize the first phase of the Texas Vietnam Veterans Memorial. When media representatives tried to interview the pony-tailed, scraggly bearded, camouflage-fatigue-wearing members of a late-arriving group of "Vietnam Vets" rather than his decently dressed delegation, Burkett decided that enough was enough.

Burkett had long been frustrated about the negative stereotype of the Vietnam veteran. He was particularly upset over the fact that he, a junior officer who did his time in "The Nam," received a couple of awards, and came home to resume his life, was viewed as an unusual example of that species, while the "guys in fatigues" were deemed typical vets of that unhappy conflict. After the fairgrounds incident, however, his frustration metamorphosed into what has become a consuming mission to confirm long-held suspicions that boys in "the camouflage crowd" weren't what they claimed to be.

Toy Soldiers

Turned out he was right. Time after time this iconoclastic bloodhound has tracked down, exposed, and, in many cases, humiliated members of "the crowd." Take his first case, for example, which involved one Jesse Duckworth, who, claiming to be a much-decorated (aren't they all?) Special Forces soldier, frequently showed up at Burkett's fundraising functions dressed in jungle fatigues, reeking of alcohol, and loudly relating his Vietnam experiences. He made himself a prime target by continually referring to Burkett and his friends as "the suits."

Duckworth, by the way, was the



Stolen Valor

Profiles Of A Phony-Hunter

by Larry Bailey

"Vietnam vet" who, in a famous UPI photograph, was captured saluting a pair of combat boots in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1987. The photo was printed in hundreds of newspapers across the country, and no correction was ever made, as far as Burkett was able to find. A similar story involves the cover picture of a fatigue-clad, medal-wearing

"Vietnam vet" at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington; Burkett found out who the guy was, dug up his record, and proved him to be a total fraud. The editor of the magazine (*The New American*) not only refused to issue a retraction but became openly hostile toward Burkett for ferreting out the truth. And *The New American* purports to be a patriotic magazine!



AP/Wide World

Identifying himself as a Marine veteran who fought in Vietnam, Roni DeJoseph, of Brooklyn, NY, weeps at The Vietnam Wall Experience, a traveling replica of The Wall, following the 1996 Memorial Day Parade in New York. Researcher Burkett could find no evidence DeJoseph served in Vietnam — or in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. Hundreds of papers nationally ran this photo of DeJoseph “paying honor to a fallen friend.”

soon became a crusade to confirm Burkett's belief that the Vietnam vet was as normal as the guy next door. Conversely, he set out to demonstrate that the bandana-wearing braggarts of “the camouflage crowd” were not representative of the young men who served honorably and well in Vietnam. One of my favorite Burkett exposés involves someone near and dear to my own heart — a phony SEAL. About five years ago, I read an interview with two VN vets, one Special Forces and one SEAL, who, showing remarkable ingenuity and dedication, conceived of, financed, constructed, and furnished the Vietnam War museum in San Antonio, Texas. Something about their interview made me wonder at the time if they were legitimate, but I let the matter drop. Not so Bulldog Burkett!

In due course, my favorite sleuth discovered that the erstwhile SEAL had been a Coast Guardsman and that the Green Beret was too young to have served in Vietnam when he claimed. The sad part about this story is that those two gents accomplished a laudable goal; they just weren't satisfied to be credited merely with their truly noteworthy achievement. (The last I heard, their museum was doing nicely, thank you.)

Nut Cases And The Gullible Media

Another favorite Burkett case was that involving a *CBS Special Report* that featured, among others, a Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) victim identified only as “Steve.” Claiming to be a former SEAL, Steve related his role as a teen-aged “Phoenix” assassin. With too many murders and atrocities weighing on his conscience, a drug-and-alcohol-addicted Steve was, according to him (and naively accepted by Dan Rather), sent home in a straitjacket.

When I saw the program, I calculated Steve's claim to have been a 17-year-old assassin and figured he would have had to start SEAL training when he was 14 or 15 years old. Then there were other problems: One of them was that there were never any SEALs assigned to the Phoenix program. Another was his claim to have spent two years “behind enemy lines” plying his trade. That expression is always the trademark of a phony or an ignoramus, because, in Vietnam, one was either (take your pick) (1) always or (2) never “behind enemy lines,” such was the nature of that war.

Always a couple of steps (or miles) ahead of my own research, Burkett quickly learned Steve's full name — Steven Ernest Southards — and that he was never a SEAL. Although he had been in Vietnam, it was as

Now back to our story. Suspicious from the first, Burkett, whose day job is that of financial adviser, decided to find out just who Brother Duckworth really was. An inquiry to the National Personnel Records Center soon confirmed Burkett's suspicions. It turned out that this stinking, swaggering, green-beret-flaunting, Purple Heart-wearing war hero had never set foot in Vietnam, hav-

ing spent most of his military duty in Germany, where he was less than a model soldier. When Burkett revealed his real history to the Dallas media (which included his having been discharged as a private due to repeated periods of being AWOL), Big Jesse promptly dropped from sight.

What started as a one-off mission to expose a particularly objectionable phony



(left) Sometimes combat fantasies and fallacies have consequences outside the American Legion bar: here, Congressman James Walsh (R-NY) pins some of the nation's highest decorations for valor on a phony Vietnam veteran, Dave Goff. After Burkett exposed Goff's deception in *Reader's Digest*, he was convicted in federal court. (above) Fraud for Fun and Felonies: Executive Director of a Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) center in Dallas, John Woods, supposedly underwent surgery to remove Agent Orange-caused tumors, and had testified before congress about various Vietnam-related matters. In reality, Woods was never near Vietnam, was booted from the Coast Guard, subsequently convicted in Texas of firearms and drugs transgressions, and did time.

a fireman apprentice in support bases. According to Burkett, Southards also spent time in the Philippines, where, like Jesse Duckworth, he spent an inordinate amount of time in the brig for having indulged in too much time off without permission, commonly known as AWOL.

Similarly, four of the remaining five veterans allegedly traumatized by their Vietnam experiences were shown to have misrepresented their sojourn in that unhappy country. One, who claimed to have skinned alive (in an hour, no less!) some 50 Vietnamese civilians, has been diagnosed as a paranoid-schizophrenic by the Army and draws almost \$2,000 per month in disability payments. (I wonder how many other phonies concoct Vietnam PTSD and other stories to justify their claims to taxpayer dollars.)

This case is still not closed, as CBS (pre-

dictably) "stands by its story." Despite Burkett's having furnished documentation of Southards' actual history and of the false claims of at least four others, Rather and the CBS crowd refuse to acknowledge their error. Dandy Dan may yet get his comeuppance, however, since a producer at a rival network knows the true story and is laboring to bring it to the viewing public's attention. (I can't help but fantasize, by the way, about someone exposing those frauds who claim to be responsible TV journalists; anybody come to mind?)

The Trouble With Troubled Vets

One of Burkett's earlier cases occurred in 1988, when a homeless vagrant shot and killed a policeman in Dallas. *The Dallas Times Herald* reported that the killer was a



One Jack Maslin of Delaware displays medals awarded for his Vietnam service, including the DSC: He was actually a clerk who was awarded no valorous decorations. (inset) Several years later, as a member of the Delaware Air National Guard, he still wears bogus medals ... and is considered one of the most decorated veterans on the Delaware Guard.

deeply troubled Vietnam veteran. Upon checking the man's service record, however, Burkett learned that he had never served in Vietnam at all. Despite writing several letters to the paper, Burkett was never able to obtain a correction from the *Times Herald*.

The cross-town *Dallas Morning News*, on the other hand, was quick to print a correction on its front page when Burkett uncovered the truth about one John Woods, who was executive director of a Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) center in Dallas.

The *News*, in a flattering story, reported that he had undergone surgery to remove Agent Orange-caused tumors and had testified before congress about various Vietnam-related matters.

Burkett's investigations showed that Woods' military career consisted of a year in the Coast Guard, with Honolulu, Hawaii, being the closest he ever got to Vietnam. Having established a consistent history of drug abuse as a Coast

Just recently, I encountered a doozy of a character at a local fast-food emporium. While waiting to order, I overheard a long-haired character telling a uniformed soldier from Ft. Belvoir, Va., that he had served three tours in Vietnam and that he was in Delta Force and that he was a personal friend of Colonel Charlie Beckman [sic]. Preening my suspicions, I collected my supper and sat down at a table near the guy. Being as casual as possible, I asked him politely when he was in Delta. When he answered "1972," I knew I had another fraud on my hands.

Fast-Food Phony

I asked him how he could have been in Delta in 1972 when it wasn't formed up until the late 1970s; then he started to insinuate to his buddy that I was illegitimate.

It was at this juncture that I asked him why he was claiming to be something he clearly wasn't. He hemmed and hawed and evaded and naturally never owned up to being an impostor, but he did sputter when I informed him that the first commander of First Special Forces Operating Detachment — Delta was Colonel Charlie Beckwith, not Beckman! Of course, he informed me that "everybody" who knew Charlie called him Beckman. I could see that there was no purpose to be served by continuing to press him, so I simply remarked that if he bought *SOF* in three or four months he would see himself in print!

And this final rejoinder is for him: Buddy, if you have problems with who you are or what you are, then be sure that you aren't making false claims to someone who knows better. If you persist in claiming to be a Vietnam hero or a Delta operator or a deep sea diver or an American Gladiator, you just might run into a "real guy" who might not be as pacifistic as I was in dealing with the situation! Or, even worse, you just might be talking to Jug Burkett!

—L.B.



A perennial on the fraud circuit, Frank Dux (immortalized in Jean-Claude Van Damme's movie *Bloodsport*, and in *SOF's* "Full Mental Jacket" review of Dux's spurious autobiography *The Secret Man* in August 1996) is shown here in Marine uniform with a PX-salad of bogus medals, and (inset) with a martial arts trophy allegedly won in a "world championship" but which was made near Dux's home, in North Hollywood.

Guardsman, Woods was declared unsuitable for military service and discharged. Upon his return to Texas, he was convicted of firearms and drugs transgressions and spent time in prison. When Burkett showed Woods' service record to a *News* reporter, the paper was quick to acknowledge its error, unlike most media organizations.

I asked Burkett which of his exposés gives him the most satisfaction. He hesitated, then related the tale of one David Goff, the former president of a VVA chapter in Morrisville, NY. In a ceremony at nearby Syracuse in 1989, Representative James

Walsh (R-NY) belatedly pinned nine Vietnam-related medals on Goff, including the nation's number-two award, the Distinguished Service Cross. In its coverage of the ceremony, the *Syracuse Herald American* dubbed Goff a "hero."

Burkett became suspicious of Goff when the latter claimed to have been a CIA assassin and to be suffering from the usual illnesses that seem to be part of the phony-vet syndrome (PTSD, depression, alcoholism, etc.). When Burkett obtained military records indicating that Goff had never been to Vietnam at all, he made them available to the *Herald American*.

Not surprisingly, the paper "stands by its story," despite the fact that Goff confessed, was convicted in federal court, and was meted a \$2,000 fine and sentenced to probation and community service. The Army, not surprisingly, has repossessed all the medals Rep. Walsh pinned on him. (To his credit, the congressman was instrumental in charges being brought against Goff.)

The Real Vietnam Vet Stands Up

What has been the greatest disappoint-



Stephen T. Banko III, of Buffalo, NY, displays his Vietnam decorations — including the Distinguished Service Cross he was not awarded. Many claim Banko is the most decorated veteran of New York state. Oh, well ...

ment in Burkett's campaign to bring out the truth about Vietnam veterans? He avers it to be the general unwillingness of the media to correct the record when they make mistakes. It would appear that the more outlandish the story told by these phony vets, and the more definitive the proof of their lies, the less inclined are the media to correct their stories.

The Dallas Morning News, according to Burkett, was unique in its prompt repudiation of the Woods story. The attitudes of CBS, the *Syracuse Herald American*, and the *Dallas Times Herald* are more typical, unhappily for those of us who long to see objective treatment of the Vietnam veteran.

What, indeed, is the typical Vietnam vet? It appears certain from data Burkett has accumulated that the vet is different from the average American, albeit not in the manner that the media would lead us to expect. Among other things, statistical analyses in Burkett's possession demonstrate that Vietnam veterans:

- have a lower unemployment rate than the national average;

Continued on page 73



The grander the fraud, the better its reception. Bogus Medal-of-Honor recipient, David Wilk, addresses an audience at the Dallas VA hospital, where he was honored as the keynote speaker.

Partners In Slime?

Not content with simply exposing phony heroes, Jug Burkett has taken on another mission — exposing fraud within the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital system! This crusade got started when, in the course of his seminal research on wannabes, Burkett came into contact with a number of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) victims. So, he did what Burkett does best — checked 'em out. Turns out that, according to him, up to three-quarters (that's 75%) of all PTSD sufferers were never in combat at all! He relates story after story of migrant "Vietnam veterans" who travel from one VA hospital to another until they persuade some weenie of a staff psychologist to diagnose them as suffering from PTSD, which all too often results in these phonies obtaining 100% disability payments.

What makes that situation even worse is the fact that these parasites obtain access to VA hospitals without having even a rudimentary records check done to prove eligibility for VA benefits. A phony DD-214 seems to work all too well, and the VA system itself contributes to the ease with which the system is accessed and the

extent to which it is abused. Burkett maintains that the VA aids and abets this fraud in order to create and keep jobs — he also maintains that congress is also accountable in that it enacts legislation (often if not always sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America — successors to Vietnam Veterans against the War) that broadens the charter of VA hospitals not only to accept more psychiatric patients, but to actually search them out! Believe it or not, PTSD diagnoses are now being made for wives and children of Vietnam vets (or whatever)!

Burkett cites case after case of blatant abuse of the system by both ineligible patients and medical staff, with some professionals actually creating "legends" for putative PTSD patients. It is his view that the entire VA system, from top to bottom, is corrupt and needs a drastic overhaul. He is so upset about the abuses that, when I speak with him, he spends more time on that subject than on phony heroes. In my judgment, it is dead-certain that his next book will be an exposé of how non-combatant (and in many cases non-veteran) patients can obtain treatment at the expense of the average American.

For my part, I'd sell my stock in the VA hospital system once Jug Burkett gets up a head of steam!

—L.B.

The largest bust of illegal machine guns in the history of U.S. law enforcement — 2,000 Chinese-made AK-47s and silencers shipped in crates marked as “tools” — might well be cause for considerable bragging rights, especially in the most fervently anti-gun administration in our history.

Instead, the two Department of Treasury agencies involved, the U.S. Customs Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, are curiously low-key about the undercover sting known as “Dragon Fire.” Agents got the guns and five lower-ranking conspirators in March 1996. Most were U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry, who pleaded guilty to violating the Arms Embargo Act. Sentencing is pending.

The sting remains a mystery, though. The two ringleaders and their six lieutenants, businessmen from the People’s Republic of China who are top executives for China’s two government-owned arms manufacturers, Poly Technologies and Norinco, apparently were tipped off about the highly classified sting.

Federal agents had hoped to lure the two top Chinese arms-manufacturing executives, who had met at least once with the undercover agents, back to U.S. soil. Several of the others were in the United States, but managed to elude agents with arrest warrants and return to the PRC. All eight are listed as fugitives.

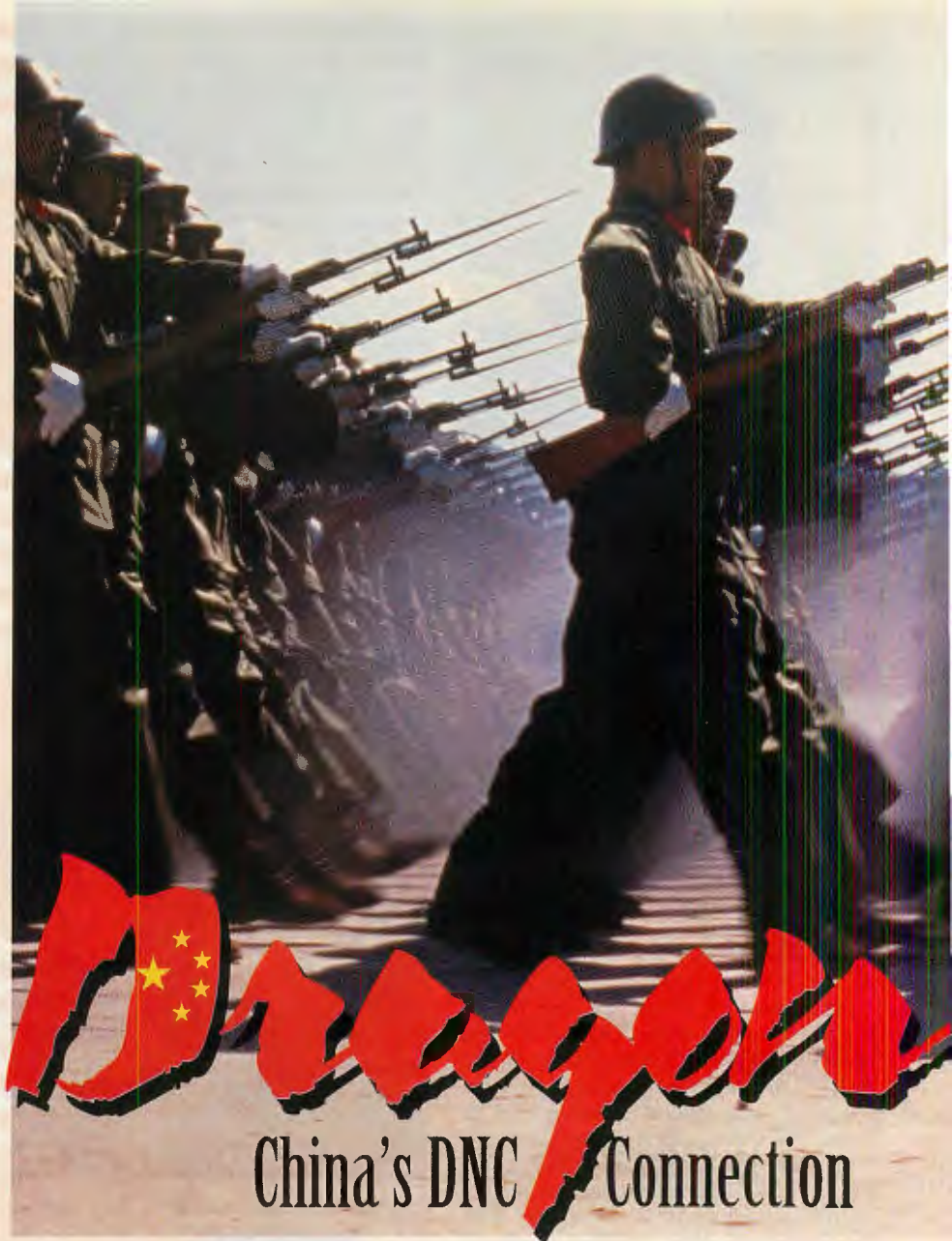
“There is no trial pending,” William Shaeffer, the assistant U.S. attorney in the organized crime strike force in San Francisco, which headed the case, confirmed for *Soldier Of Fortune*. “We were notified by the government in the PRC that four of those eight had been tried at home, convicted and sentenced to up to 13 years in prison.”

Asked if he had any way to independently verify the trials and reported prison sentences in China, Shaeffer declined comment.

“I can tell you that whatever happens or doesn’t happen in the PRC has no bearing on their status here,” he said. “These eight men are still considered fugitives, and there are warrants outstanding for their arrests. We believe at least seven of them are still in the PRC. This case is still an open case.”

The number of machine guns and silencers seized, and the fact that the secret sting operation may have been betrayed by someone within our government, are not the most disturbing aspects of Dragon Fire. Perhaps more

The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (above) is not merely a force of 220,000,000 men; it is also one of the world’s biggest business entities, with industrial/commercial, espionage and diplomatic endeavors interwoven like a fine silken fabric. (right) Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.), chair of committee investigating campaign finance irregularities, left, clears way through reporters as he escorts Democratic Party contributor Johnny Chung (center). Chung’s lawyer Brian Sun is at the far right. More than \$300,000 funneled into the DNC coffers by Chung was returned when it came to light. Is it possible the return for this largess was to be more than an autographed photo of Hillary Rodham Clinton?



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by James L. Pate

disconcerting are the allegations of who was behind the gun-running conspiracy — high-ranking PRC officials — and the accusation in the indictments that these weapons were headed for West Coast street gangs.

Red Guards In America

Some of these street gangs, according to the *San Francisco Examiner*, are headed by illegal immigrants who once were members of the Chinese army's elite, ultra-Marxist Red Guard. Evidence indicates Chinese government officials knew about — and may have participated in — the gun-running conspiracy.

Worst of all, it's not the first time that attempts to smuggle machine guns — and even far more destructive weapons — have been linked to China. Nor is it the first time that word of the subsequent investigation was leaked to the perpetrators. Apparently the world's most powerful and most populous communist country may have eyes, ears and influence at the highest levels of the United States government.

Possibly no one understands this better

than a one-time federal undercover operative named Mickey Downie. The burly, bearded big-game hunter and Class III machine gun dealer knows first hand what it's like to run up against the invisible wall that seems to protect people using Chinese money to smuggle weapons into the United States from Southeast Asia.

Downie is familiar to *Soldier Of Fortune* readers for his undercover work for U.S. Customs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In 1989-90, Downie was the principal undercover agent in "Operation Leatherneck," an alleged conspiracy by the communist governments of China and Vietnam — and a small group of retired U.S. military officers — to smuggle \$70 million worth of automatic weapons, grenade and rocket launchers and other high-end ordnance to street gangs in the United States (see "Operation Leatherneck" and "Leatherneck II" January and February '95, respectively).

The Operation Leatherneck shipment, which was to be busted on the high seas, was

Syigma

to include 400,000 full-auto M16s abandoned in the fall of South Vietnam, 750,000 M1 carbines and M1 Garands, grenade launchers, TOW missiles and LAW rockets, Red Eye surface-to-air missiles and much more.

After Special Agent Frank Caliendo, with whom Downie had worked for more than 10 years, was arbitrarily transferred at a critical juncture in the Leatherneck investigation, Downie became convinced that someone in Customs or its higher headquarters, the Treasury Department, was trying to deliberately sabotage the operation. That conviction deepened when Caliendo was replaced by a rookie agent just out of training school who had no investigative experience, much less any savvy about international arms smuggling.

Accusing U.S. Customs supervisory agents of a cover-up, Downie resigned from Leatherneck and was quickly picked by the FBI as an undercover operative in a probe of police corruption in Cleveland. Within months, under the supervision of FBI Special Agent Dan Estrem, Downie played a key role in the arrest and prosecution of 47 crooked Cleveland cops who were taking bribes to protect gambling and narcotics operations. It was one of the largest and most successful public corruption cases in U.S. history. But it didn't exactly endear Downie to everyone in law enforcement circles.

Apparently motivated by his accusations of a cover-up in the aborted Leatherneck

Former U.S. Customs and FBI undercover operative Mickey Downie displays a part of the surveillance tapes and document files he accumulated during the six months he worked Operation Leatherneck. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control was unable to cover up its sabotage of Leatherneck because Downie kept copies of virtually every evidentiary document he obtained.



James L. Pate

probe, some supervisory Customs and ATF agents who'd known and used Downie for years began a campaign of retribution and harassment against him, one he said is ongoing. Also caught in the bureaucratic crossfire were Estrem, Caliendo and other federal agents who supported Downie. Punitive transfers sent Estrem to Anchorage, Alaska, and Caliendo to Los Angeles. Caliendo's group supervisor, Bill Allen, was sent to Seoul, South Korea.

Internal investigations were conducted, but agents reaching conclusions supportive of Downie were also punished. Jim McCarten, a former investigator with Treasury's Inspector General's office, resigned. Tom Strzemienski, a former

Plittman and Bob Sheridan, to stop forwarding information to U.S. prosecutors. Then, without informing other Customs officials, Newcomb sent Standard Chartered Bank in New York a cease-and-desist letter, which "angry Treasury officials ... said ... effectively tipped off the bank."

Because the bank is owned by the PRC, and because the PRC was financing the deal to smuggle abandoned U.S. ordnance from Vietnam back into the United States, presumably it also tipped off the gun-running conspirators.

When Plittman and Sheridan filed official complaints about this and other questionable actions by their boss, Newcomb took steps to abolish their jobs. Both were

reduced in rank and pay. Both long-time special agents, Sheridan was reduced to being an analyst, Downie said, and Plittman was sent back to basic agent training school.

The good news is that Downie has been fighting back. He has won the first two federal lawsuits he filed in the aftermath of Leatherneck, and three more are pending. And, although supervisory agents in Customs and ATF placed his life in danger by publicly exposing several of his undercover identities, Downie has not only survived, but thrived. With much of his extensive source network still intact, he has been exacting his own retribution.

Long March To Long Beach



Customs agent-turned-congressional-staff-investigator, was assigned to look into Leatherneck. He came to work one day to find the locks changed on his office door and his job abolished.

Higher-Up Cover-Up

Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, headed by R. Richard Newcomb, also did an internal investigation. OFAC, responsible for monitoring all international banking transactions that cross U.S. borders, got involved when Downie and Caliendo, while tracking the financing for Leatherneck's gun-running conspiracy from the PRC-controlled Standard Chartered Bank branches in Hong Kong, Singapore and New York, stumbled upon huge cash transfers from major U.S. corporations to Vietnam's communist government. At the time, Vietnam was under an economic embargo and the cash transfers, made through the same Chinese banks, violated the Trading with the Enemy Act.

A subsequent audit verified the transfer of millions of dollars from the U.S. corporations through the China-controlled bank to the Vietnam government, the Associated Press reported, but punitive action was not taken. To the contrary, OFAC's boss, Newcomb, ordered his investigators, Steve

When Customs and the BATF busted a COSCO freighter with 2,000 illegal machine guns being smuggled into West Coast street gangs, who were the "businessmen" they were dealing with? The People's Liberation Army. Clinton personally pressured the city of Long Beach to lease the former U.S. Naval base to "COSCO." Just who owns COSCO? Oh, here they are below in uniform: the People's Liberation Army, who happens to own the world's largest merchant fleet.



Part of the maelstrom of controversy surrounding the White House, the Democratic National Committee and suspect campaign contributions includes not only large amounts of cash suspected to come from the Chinese, but large contributions from U.S. industrialists — who subsequently were granted export licenses for technology of use to China's defense programs. The Chinese F-8II fighter is one of many weapons systems to benefit. The Chinese were in the process of obtaining some \$19 million worth of militarily sensitive radar equipment, to go to China aboard COSCO vessels, until the plan was uncovered and quashed.

It was Downie, for instance, who was the source for the first published reports revealing plans by the Clinton Administration to lease the now-closed Long Beach Naval Shipyard facility to the Chinese Overseas Shipping Company, or COSCO. COSCO, owned by the People's Liberation Army, has the world's largest merchant fleet — including the *Empress Phoenix*, the vessel aboard which the 2,000 AK-47s were seized in Operation Dragon Fire on 18 March 1996.

The proposed Long Beach shipyard deal — which is in limbo because of several lawsuits and possible congressional intervention — is interesting on several levels.

Despite a \$50 million modernization in recent years, and that it sits in immediate proximity to several sensitive and, in some cases, highly classified, U.S. signal intelligence and military-industrial facilities, plus the U.S. Naval Weapons Station at Seal Beach, the Long Beach shipyard was closed by the Clinton Administration and given to the city of Long Beach.

Clinton then took a personal hand in pushing city leaders to lease the state-of-the-art facility to COSCO. Besides being an ideal location from which to smuggle contraband into or out of the U.S., the shipyard is also

ideally located to gather intelligence from the aforementioned sensitive facilities. Yet Clinton's decision to push the COSCO lease was made without an operational security review by the National Security Council.

"There seemed to be no reason to check with the National Security Council on the decision made by Long Beach," said former White House lawyer Lanny Davis, who was prominent among Clinton's defenders in the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal.

Clinton met twice with Long Beach officials to discuss the COSCO lease proposal, once in 1996, and in September 1995. Among those attending the latter meeting was Carmen Perez, vice president of the Long Beach Harbor Commission. Her involvement is of interest because she also was a former vice chair of the Democratic National Committee, which is at the eye of the investigative storm swirling around the campaign financing scandal. The focus of that scandal is whether the PRC, through agents of influence primarily located in Arkansas and California, funneled desperately needed money into Clinton's campaign coffers — a violation of federal law.

Fellow Marchers

The unusual circumstance of White House intervention in the decision-making of a local government over what to do with a closed military facility did not go unnoticed.

"A Clinton administration official made what several people involved describe as highly unusual telephone calls to push for construction there of a container terminal that would be leased to a shipping company owned by the Chinese government," the *New York Times* reported. "... Several officials who received them said it was highly unusual for the White House to intervene on behalf of one side in a local battle like this one, especially when the intervention benefited the cause of a private [sic] company ... Several of those officials said the White House pressure had been unprecedented ..."

Thanks to that pressure, COSCO apparently was getting a very sweet deal. "Bids were not sought on the project," wrote AP reporter John Solomon, which effectively shut out possible competition by U.S. shipping companies, who badly need the business. Also cut out of the deal was a U.S. Marine Corps battalion which located there after its former headquarters was destroyed in California's North Ridge earthquake in 1994. Despite their plea to remain, the Marine unit was evicted in the face of White House pressure.

The Port of Long Beach, almost \$1 billion in debt, plans to issue bonds to finance the estimated \$200 million in dredging, demolition and new construction needed to accommodate COSCO's needs, according to *Relevance*, a monthly non-partisan watchdog publication. Also budgeted is reimbursement for COSCO's moving costs.

And what kind of corporate citizen might COSCO make in the community? The company was fined \$400,000 for paying kickbacks to avoid U.S. tariffs in 1994. In its edition of 5 January 1997, the *Chicago*

Tribune reported that COSCO was helping PTK, a Poly Technologies subsidiary company, to smuggle military technology out of the United States.

"... Poly executives wrote memos showing they planned to purchase at least \$19 million worth of militarily sensitive U.S.-made radar equipment, then use [COSCO] to send the products to a harbor about 100 miles from Beijing," the *Chicago* daily reported.



UPI/Jim Ruymen

President Clinton personally came to Long Beach in August 1996 to promote the city's lease of the former U.S. Navy facilities to the People's Liberation Army's shipping company, COSCO.

Yet executives from these same Trojan horse companies, such as Poly Tech's chairman, Wang Jun, and Hongye Zheng, a senior COSCO adviser, managed to pay calls on Comrade Clinton at White House fund raisers.

Vultures Of A Feather Fly Together

The latter was introduced to Clinton by Johnny Chung, the Chinese-American businessman from California. Two days earlier, Chung had made a \$50,000 donation to the Democratic National Committee, personally handed over to Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, Maggie Williams. A total of \$366,000 of DNC contributions by Chung were "returned," Democratic party leaders explained, after the money became the focus of several investigations into illegal campaign donations.

Poly Tech's boss, Wang Jun, who drew the attention of investigating agents in the Dragon Fire sting, was escorted to his White House meeting with Clinton on 2 February 1996, by a longtime Little Rock pal of Clinton's, Ya Lin "Charlie" Trie. (see "China Syndrome" October '98.) Trie is under investigation for donating \$600,000 to a defense fund set up to pay Clinton's staggering legal bills brought on by the host of scandals besetting his administration.

Just prior to their meeting with Clinton,

Wang Jun and Trie met privately with John Huang, a top-level assistant to the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. Brown was a former DNC chairman who, at the time of his death, was under investigation for allegedly accepting up to \$1 million from communist leaders in Hanoi in the time frame leading up to Clinton's lifting of the economic embargo against Vietnam.

According to U.S. Representative Gerald Solomon, heading one of several campaign finance investigations in congress, Huang was a "Chinese political operative ... placed in the government of this country ... to conduct economic espionage and even breach ... national security, while at the same time having free access to the White House."

Four days before his meetings at the Commerce Department and the White House, Wang Jun got something no one else has been able to get from the most ardent anti-gun president in history; a waiver to import Chinese-made semi-auto rifles outlawed under Clinton's cherished "assault rifle" ban.

On 2 February 1996, Clinton had signed a waiver allowing Poly Tech to import 100,000 of the rifles Clinton had vilified as a favorite killing tool of street gangs. It was later learned that these weapons were destined for a company known as CJA in Detroit. *NBC News* reported that CJA was a front company for the Chinese national police.

Chung, Huang and Trie are all reportedly cooperating in an ongoing investigation in campaign finance irregularities. It is a case that Attorney General Janet Reno — despite recommendations to the contrary by FBI Director Louis Freeh — continues to insist does not have enough evidence to merit the attention of a special prosecutor.

Further investigation into the Dragon Fire case, meanwhile, seems to be in limbo. The AK-47 assault rifles that were seized in Operation Dragon Fire, the indictments allege, were supposed to be a test run for a smuggling pipeline that was to later funnel into the United States more lethal items from the Chinese army's infantry weapons inventory; everything from grenade launchers to the shoulder-fired Red Parakeet surface-to-air missiles. All were to go to U.S. street gangs. Sound familiar?

Guerrillas In Our Midst?

Could there already be agent provocateurs in our midst, awaiting implementation of a plan by their communist bosses to furnish them with the "tools" of their terrorist trade, to empower the violent upheaval of our government and society? Scarier still, though, is the possibility that there are those in our government who would protect them and their evil plans.

Many people, including some of our nation's political and military leaders, not to mention greedy corporate board chairmen more interested in market share than national security, will tell you that the People's Republic of China should be cultivated as an ally, that such "red-baiting" about the

Continued on page 68

Death & Taxes

Continued from page 43

ministry joint police task force were nervously smoking cigarettes, listening to radio communications and going over final plans.

BATFsky Raid

One of the task force members had only minutes before been driven over to the target and asked to buy a few thousand dollars worth of wine using marked money. If all went to plan, this would be the second time this year that the Alpha-Omega alcohol warehouse had sold tax police wine with phony tax stamps.

"If the 'muscle' behind the warehouse was less powerful than the police," Poshupkin said, "maybe this time we will close them down for good."

Ten minutes later we were running towards the warehouse.

The officer in on the buy had identified himself and now needed backup to complete the arrests. Pistols came out, walkie-talkies began crackling and our systems went into hyper-drive.

When SOF was finally allowed into the warehouse, four warehouse workers and a private security guard were being pat searched while tax-police detectives were checking the phony tax stamps on the wine. In the warehouse office, two officers

were going through file cabinets, while another officer stumbled upon a strong box below the cash register containing the ruble equivalent of \$250,000 in cash.

The warehouse owner then calmly grabbed his cellular telephone and called his lawyer. When told that the money would have to be confiscated if he couldn't prove receipts for it, the man shrugged and lit a cigarette.

"He's cool about it now," said joint task force detective Igor Yurisov, "but after one or two weeks in jail he'll be more cooperative. Maybe he'll even tell us who is protecting him and where the alcohol is going to."

Yurisov said the phony export of alcohol, as a way to evade taxes, has become increasingly widespread. For example, he said, he remembered a case against the management of a biochemical plant who cobbled together a string of fake contracts with foreign firms for the supply of vodka. In reality, however, the "export consignments" of vodka were sold in Russia.

"These guys then made big profits by claiming huge VAT [value-added tax] and duty exemptions that normally apply to exports," he said.

A Fifth Of Vodka: No Fifth of Amendment

Back in the warehouse, the detectives had separated the workers, forced a number of them onto their knees and were writing

out confessions that everyone was expected to sign. "We know what was going on here, so it's better if we write it in clear Russian," said joint task force detective Andre Kisin, "The suspect then agrees with what I've written and he signs it."

A tax ministry video team had arrived, and was busy taping the raid for use in court.

"What kind of a camera is that?" the security guard asked one of the detectives while reading over his prepared confession. "If you paid more than \$20,000 you could have come to me for a bargain."

"Maybe I will," came the response. "We'll be seeing a lot of each other in the next few years ... in jail."

In his celebrated *Wealth of Nations* (ca. 1776), Adam Smith wrote, referring to the possibility of taxing income, "An inquisition into every man's private circumstances, and an inquisition which, in order to accommodate the tax to them, watched over all the fluctuations of his fortune, would be a source of such continual and endless vexation as no people could support."

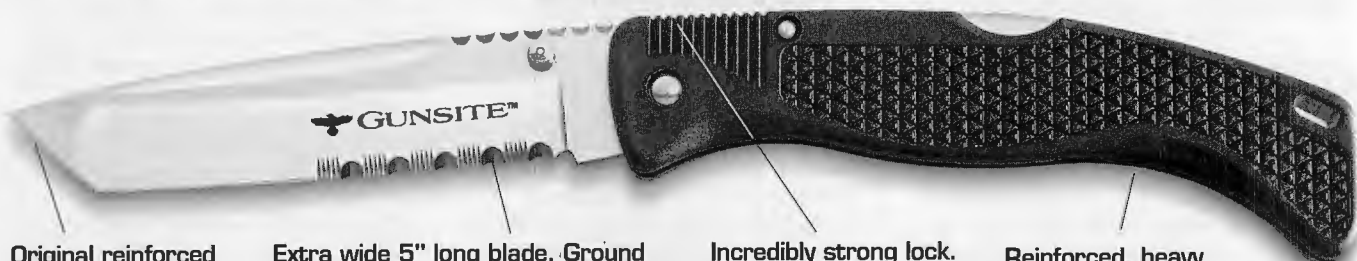
But top tax cop Almazov had the last word. "We always act in conformity with law. No matter what it is like, good or bad, it must be fulfilled."

Based in Budapest, SOF's Chief Foreign Correspondent Mark H. Milstein has the pleasure of contributing to the tax coffers of more than one government. ☞



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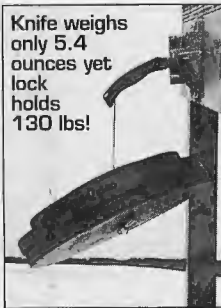
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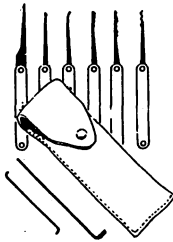
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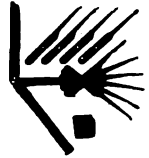
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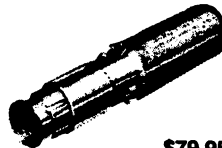
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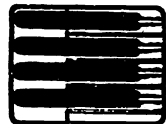
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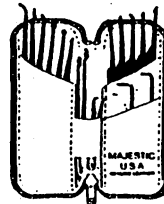
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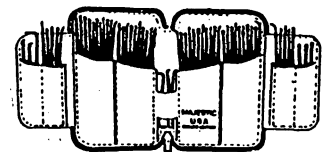
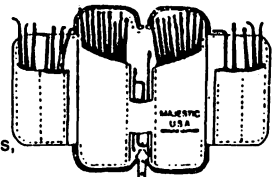


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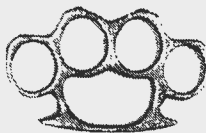
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Dragon Dollars

Continued from page 65

"yellow peril" of Chinese communism is shrill, unenlightened, and even racist.

This Chinese government is not our enemy, they will coo. This is about business, not war, they assure us; it is about constructive engagement.

But Chairman Mao, the founder of his nation's Communist Party and spiritual father of China's recent emergence as a global power, said it best: "War is the continuation of politics by other means. ... Every Communist must grasp the truth, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.' ... According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power ..."

In modern China, the army also acts as the chief comptroller and controlling stockholder of the myriad *ersatz* companies eager to do business in the U.S. In China, the business sector and military sector are as inseparable as are the government itself and the Chinese Communist Party. The government is the party; the party is the government. The military is business, and the business is military. The model is monolithic.

Because it was compromised by a high-level security leak, which led to the premature raid that netted only the 2,000 machine guns and silencers, the Dragon Fire investigation never went far enough to clearly link Wang Jun, Poly Tech's chairman, to the gun running conspiracy.

Tipped Off?

But several Poly Tech executives just below Wang Jun were indicted. Some who were visiting in this county made hasty returns to the PRC, conveniently avoiding arrest. Robert Ma, boss of Poly Tech's U.S. subsidiary, also made a sudden decision to return to the Motherland, two days ahead of federal agents with a warrant for his arrest. What luck for Mr. Ma! Or was it luck?

When supervisory agents at U.S. Customs Service headquarters in Washington got a telephone query from a *Los Angeles Times* reporter prior to the seizure, they suspected that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, notorious for its affinity for publicity at any cost, had leaked word of the months-long operation in an attempt to claim credit.

The case managers tried to buy time by promising an exclusive, a ploy they had to repeat when another query, this one from the *New York Times*, came in. By now fearful that their undercover operatives might be in danger, a decision was made to seize the machine guns. On the night of 18 March 1996, Customs and ATF agents raided the *Empress Phoenix*, docked at the ocean terminal in Oakland, Calif.

Among those arrested in the coming days was a key organizer on this end, Hammond Ku, a Chinese-American businessman with ties to both Norinco and Poly Tech. Also

arrested was a Chinese-American restaurant owner, Richard Chen, who had worked as a U.S. representative for Norinco.

Customs and ATF officials were quick to blame each other for the security leaks that compromised the ongoing investigation and allowed the high-level Chinese government suspects to avoid arrest by leaving the country. But enforcement of criminal laws does not occur in a political vacuum when international boundaries are crossed. To fully appreciate the implications that someone in our Executive Branch leaked word about Dragon Fire to the Chinese suspects, one has to understand the political context in which the seizure of the machine guns and silencers occurred.

In that same time frame, President Clinton and the White House were busy lobbying Congress to renew China's most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status. China's MFN designation was in serious trouble because of blatant human rights violations by the communist government against its own people, not the least of which was the massacre of unarmed students at Tiananmen Square in Peking by PLA troops armed with the same kind of AK-47 machine guns seized on the Oakland waterfront.

Changing The Course Of History

Two of the federal agents working Dragon Fire, the ATF's Dick Stoltz and Matthew King, a customs agent, had managed to lure some of Wang Jun's immediate corporate subordinates to U.S. soil for meetings on the gun-running plot, thus cementing their inclusion among indicted conspirators. King best explained what fallout their involvement would have in domestic political debate the underway on Capitol Hill.

"Can you imagine ... how congress would have voted (on MFN for China) if we had been allowed to keep going?" King was quoted as saying in *Vanity Fair* magazine of December 1997. "If we had arrested the Norinco officials who had come here to sell Red Parakeet missiles? If Dragon Fire had been able to nail the top bosses of Norinco and Poly Tech, such as Wang Jun?

"This country's China policy would be a hell of a lot different today," King said.

Agents running the case from ATF's and Customs Service's headquarters in Washington, D.C., became more disturbed when, after some initial finger-pointing back and forth, they came to the conclusion that the investigation was compromised not by leaks down the chain of command, but by someone, somewhere up above.

Their biggest clue was the first two reporters who called asking questions about Dragon Fire were not based on the West Coast. Both were based in Washington, where access to information about the highly sensitive sting was a secret known only to a small handful of high-level officials in Treasury and possibly the White House. Questioned about the tipoff, the reporters would only say theirs were "diplomatic sources," *Vanity Fair* reported.

Very diplomatic, no doubt. ☒

Heroes Time Forgot

Continued from page 39

Chief SOG, Col. Sadler, reported, "Potts and Abrams told me they didn't appreciate the full implications of [the Trail system] until all those documents came back."

Two weeks later, the Marine CH-53 and Cobra aircrews flew to Kontum to celebrate with Company B. They didn't have to buy a drink all night. "I can't say enough about those guys," said Craig Schmidt. "They were great."

Honors Reconsidered

Captain McCarley was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, while that heroic medic, Gary Michael Rose, who alone treated 50 wounded men and was himself wounded three times, was submitted for the Medal of Honor. Unfortunately, both decorations were downgraded.

And perhaps this is the single positive result from the CNN/Time "Tailwind" fiasco. When Secretary of Defense William Cohen personally met McCarley and Rose, and learned of their great courage and the bureaucracy that denied them these medals 28 years ago, he ordered a re-evaluation. So, perhaps, a quarter of a century late, these SOG warriors finally will receive the recognition that national security had made impossible in 1970.

A Roster of Heroes: The Green Berets of Operation Tailwind

Captain Eugene C. McCarley
First Sergeant Morris Adair
Sergeant Gary Michael Rose
1st Lieutenant Pete Landon
1st Lieutenant Robert Van Buskirk
Sergeant First Class Bernard Bright
Sergeant First Class Jim Brevelle
Staff Sergeant Donald Boudreau
Sergeant Michael Hagen
Specialist Five Jim Lucas
Sergeant First Class Denver Minton
Sergeant Manuel Orozco
Staff Sergeant Keith Planchich
Staff Sergeant William Scherer
Specialist Five Craig Schmidt
Sergeant Dave Young

Major John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.) is the author of many definitive books of military science and Vietnam War history.

Editor's note: This article is derived from Major Plaster's award-winning book, SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam. The accompanying photos will appear with hundreds of other never-before-seen SOG pictures in Maj. Plaster's upcoming new book, SOG: A Pictorial History, to be released in early 1999 by Paladin Press. ✕



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Omega Proving Ground

Continued from page 56

by the front leading edge of the grip frame with a line normal (perpendicular) to the bore's axis is 15 degrees, which approximates that of the Colt M1911A1 Government Model. The frame's rear strap is "humped back," while the front strap has five prominent vertical serrations. The black synthetic grip panels are each held to the frame by two screws which turn directly into threaded holes in the frame.

There is a frame-mounted decocking lever on the left side. Push downward on it and the cocked hammer will rotate forward. Push up and cover the red dot on the slide to carry the pistol in the "cocked and locked" mode. The importance of this latter feature cannot be over-emphasized, as experienced operators will almost invariably carry the pistol in this manner. The double-action trigger pull weight on our test specimen was 10.0 pounds, while the single-action sear release was a consistent 4.75 pounds.

The low-profile combat sights are excellent. The fixed blade-type front sight, 0.125-inch in width, has a single white dot. The open square-notch rear sight, 0.120-inch in width, carries two white dots and can be drifted in its dovetail in the slide to adjust windage zero. Significantly, all sharp edges have been round to facilitate a "tap, rack, bang" drill, if it should ever be required.

Disassembly procedures are conventional in every regard. Remove the magazine and visually inspect the chamber to make certain it is unloaded. Rotate the hammer back to the fully cocked position. Retract the slide until its front face is in line with the white dot on either side of the frame. This will align the slide's takedown notch with the slide retaining lug on the slide stop lever. Push the slide stop lever from the right side and remove it from the frame. Remove the recoil spring, guide rod and barrel from the slide. Completely disassemble the magazine. No further disassembly is recommended. After cleaning and lubrication, reassemble in the reverse order.

Our firing tests were conducted with Black Hills 180-grain and 155-grain Jacketed Hollow Point, as well as PMC 165-grain Full Metal Jacket/Flat Point, ammunition. The barrel's feed ramp has been exquisitely polished and there were no stoppages of any kind. Perceived recoil is minimal, largely as a consequence of the pistol's substantial mass. Combat accuracy at 7 yards is more than adequate.

Suggested retail price is \$545 complete with two magazines, plastic storage case, trigger lock and bore brush. Well-made and exceptionally reliable, the RAP 440 will appeal to those seeking a compact double-action .40 S&W pistol, as well as collectors enamored with the firearms of South Africa. The 9mm Parabellum version will be arriving shortly.—Peter G. Kokalis

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Have Guns, Will Travel

Continued from page 53

the late '60s, added immensely to the interest of the outing.

After about two hours, we stopped at a spring to rest and fill water bottles. From this vantage point we could clearly observe a Serbian border post in the distance about 1,000 meters away. Although they were partially obscured, we could make out the twin snouts of what appeared to be a dug-in 14.5mm ZPU-2 or a pair of ZU-23s, complete with overhead cover; in addition they had a 12.7x108mm DshK on an anti-aircraft mount. We could also see four guys: two watching us from the top of the bunker with binoculars, and two others with what looked to be long-barreled (sniper) rifles, moving forward of the installation to take up position in the rocks facing us.

As we all amused ourselves by watching each other, a 60mm mortar round exploded in a draw several hundred meters to our south, scattering the shepherds and their flocks who were on the upper edge of the rim. This was followed by another that landed higher up, prompting "The Commandant," who was leading the expedition, to order a rapid dispersal, moving us out of sight of the Serb bunker.

Snipers Say Hello

I do not think they were actually attempting to hit us; that was simply their way of saying, "hello." We followed a covered approach to the top of the ridge line which represented the border, advancing by bounds because of the threat of snipers. Once there, we located and photographed a number of shell craters from 60mm mortars and what appeared to be rifle grenades fired at high angle. While a camera crew from Tirana got it all on VHS, Harry conducted a crater analysis and surveyed-in the impact sites using GPS. We then scouted around until we found two sets of concealed positions in the numerous rock formations that dot the area, presumably from where the snipers had hit the six people the week before.

The spent cases we were able to recover were all 7.62x39mm, indicating that no really sophisticated equipment had been used. Also, the road was only 150 meters away. While we were there, in spite of the recent ambush, the occasional mule train could be seen moving up and down this well-traveled trail.

Throughout our investigations, armed men in various bits and pieces of uniforms materialized to converse with the leaders of the group, only to disappear again. Prior to the departure from the area by the official party, all the outsiders, which included ourselves plus the film crew, were escorted to a holding area out of sight of The Commandant, Mr. Dedja, and their group. We assumed it was because they were planning to conduct a meeting with some of the KLA leaders. They remained for about an

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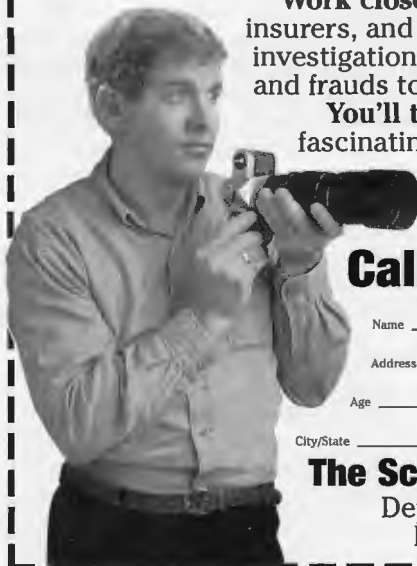
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hour and a half, while we passed the time watching the Serbs through Harry's Steiner 7X50mm binoculars, and my Bushnell 8X40mms, while they reciprocated in like manner. Our Albanian escorts were very interested in my Bushnell Range Finder, but the Serbian position was too far away for the laser to be effective.

The latter group was gracious enough not to lob over any more mortar rounds or try out their heavy machine guns (or cannon) on us, which was greatly appreciated. When the main body linked up with us, we began the torturous return, which was only slightly less arduous than the ascent. We were joined by several returning caravans, which seemed to appreciate the security offered by our numbers and weapons. About halfway down we ran into two young guys who had set fire to some scrub vegetation and were raising a lot of smoke. The Commandant, to discover what they were up to, once again advised the "outsiders" to keep moving, while he and his men had a cordial chat at gunpoint with them. Whatever happened, they did not get shot, and the no-nonsense Commandant and Company soon caught up with us.

Once we reached the vehicles, everyone took a smoke break and munched on the stash of Power Bars I had in the rucksack, while Mark photographed all and sundry. On the way back we were treated to the sight of a village that was being "cleansed" over on the Kosovo side. The

whole place was in flames with little fireballs erupting from time to time as flammable materials went up. While we were observing this cross-border spectacle, we also noted with mild interest a group of people who were shooting at something — or each other — about 800 meters to our southeast. Apparently they preferred to work without an audience and loosed several warning bursts in our direction, which we took as a signal to mount up and continue back to Bajram-Curri, where we arrived at about 2200.

When everyone compared notes back at the hotel, we concluded there was, indeed, an active arms smuggling operation in progress, carried out with the tacit consent of local authorities. Based upon the types and markings of the weapons we observed, it was apparent many had been looted from government arsenals during the rampage in 1997, when an estimated 652,000 arms of all sorts and 3,600 tons of ammunition and explosives were lost. Whether a significant amount of material was finding its way into Albania from surrounding countries sympathetic to the Kosovo cause could not really be determined from the sampling of guns we inspected.

Our overall observations led us to conclude that the smuggling operations were occurring on two levels: small shipments destined for individuals or groups who were marshaling at Tropojë then conducting clandestine crossings to join resistance move-

ments on the other side of the mountains; or, on a larger scale, bundles of weapons and goods transported by pack animals to drop sites just behind the border or to contact agents on the other side.

This would explain the Serbian interest in subjecting the Albanian side of the border to intermittent harassing and interdictory fires, and sending hunter-killer teams on cross-border missions.

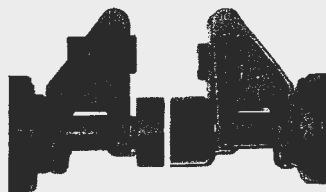
Like A Trickle Of Water

There is probably a mix of motivations governing this prolific little enterprise — sympathy for their clansmen on the other side of the mountains, as well as the opportunity to make a profit from all the stray weapons floating around Albania. Even though it might appear that a pipeline relying on animal transport would ultimately prove incapable of preparing and equipping the KLA for large-scale operations, the traffic we witnessed was like the trickle of warm water from the shower in the Ermal Hotel. It was slow, it was antiquated, and it was admittedly *ad hoc*; nevertheless, it worked — and was greatly appreciated by the end user.

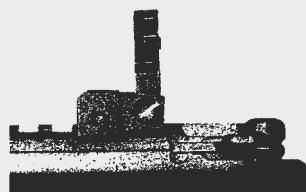
Colonel Mike Peck, USA (Ret.), earned a Distinguished Service Cross for service in Vietnam and has conducted substantial international training and security work. Harry Humphries, a security consultant and former Navy SEAL, contributed to this report. ✕

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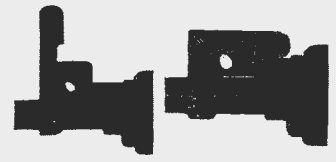
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Stolen Valor

Continued from page 61

- received dishonorable discharges less frequently than non-Vietnam vets;
- left military service at higher ranks than their peers;
- have no higher rates of divorce, suicide, alcoholism, and drug addiction than the general population;
- and have been more successful than their peers who did not go to Vietnam.

So, what does this all say about the long-haired, smelly, self-congratulatory individuals who create the impression that they are the true human heritage of the Vietnam War? What it says to Burkett is that they are one screwed-up bunch of people, people that "... would have been screwed up if they had worked for the Cincinnati Transit System."

What it also says to him is that this abominable stereotype of the Vietnam vet is largely a concoction of the media. They, not content with having played such a decisive role in our defeat in Vietnam, justify that role by presenting "the crowd," with its hangups and neuroses, as evidence of their omniscience about the evil nature of the conflict. They cannot bear to consider that the average Vietnam veteran is what Burkett says he is — the guy around the corner with

a job, a wife and kids, and a mortgage.

Setting The Record Straight

Jug Burkett is truly a man with a mission, if not an obsession. His concern with debunking what he refers to as "The Myth of the Vietnam Vet," given today's public perceptions, is surely a tall order, but one he continues to try to fill. As he says about his task, "If not me, who? If not now, when?" I asked him how he planned to continue to draw attention to those parasites who survive on the blood shed by their betters.

First, he told me of his increasing exposure in the media. His first important national exposure was in Malcolm McConnell's article, "True Face of the Vietnam Vet" in the May 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest*. Then, on ABC TV's 20-20 news magazine show in October of the same year, he was featured as the pre-eminent authority on the phenomenon of the

To order *Stolen Valor* by B. G. "Jug" Burkett (700 pages, 16 pages of photos), dial toll-free 1-800-8253-6789. To order by mail send your name and address with payment or credit card information to: Verity Press, P.O. Box 50366, Dallas, TX 75250. The book costs \$31.95, plus \$4.95 postage and handling (Texas residents add 8.25% sales tax). For an autographed copy, please add \$3. Further information is available at the website: www.stolenvalor.com.

phony Vietnam vet. Burkett then told me a sad story about another segment of the media — the publishing world. Having been so successful in uncovering such a large number of phonies, he was certain that he would have no trouble at all in obtaining a contract with a major publishing house for a book relating his experiences and discoveries. In his mind, such a book would go a long way toward sensitizing Americans to the problem of Vietnam-era impostors.

It was not to be, however; not a single publishing house was willing to commission Burkett's proposed work. Burkett couldn't believe that the American reading public would not be interested in reading about one of the major scandals of our time, so, as he's become used to doing, he decided to publish his own book. And that's "where he is" now — having hired a first-rate writer to collaborate with him in writing a book to be issued by his own newly created publishing house. I'll guarantee you that one of the first copies will be bought by your friendly correspondent!

As a man who did what his conscience compelled him to do once he realized the extent of the problem, Jug Burkett deserves the respect and gratitude of all those Americans who reported when called and fought when directed; he certainly has mine.

Former SEAL Larry Bailey is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

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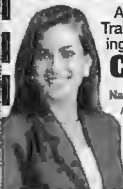
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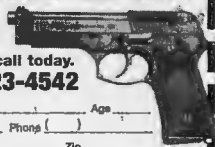


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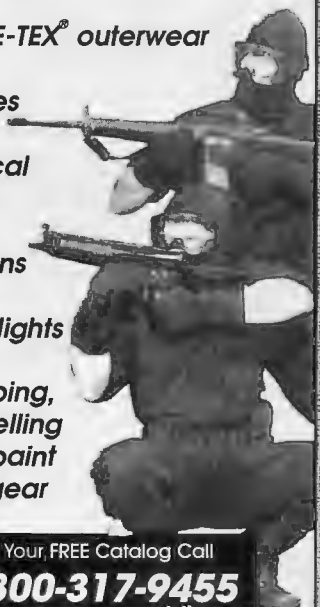


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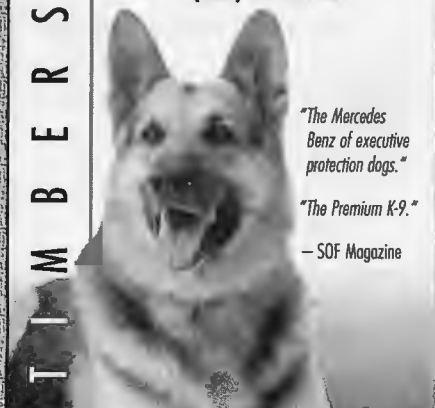
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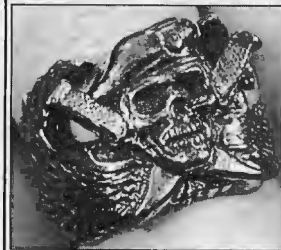
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Bad Leaders Equal Bad Units

Hooray and hallelujah! Daryl Jones, Bill Clinton's nominee for Secretary of the Air Force, got shot down in flames by a brave Senate committee.

John Warner (R.-Va.) spearheaded this maneuver, ably backed up by Charles Robb (D.-Va.) and Robert Byrd (D.-W.Va.). They and other panel members put America ahead of partisan politics and stopped Jones from further zapping an Air Force already under siege.

Senate panel members — where a majority put conscience over cronyism — will catch a lot of flack from politically correct hand-wringers who think affirmative action and quotas are more important than putting the right person in the right job when it comes to defending America.

Jones' nomination was by far the worst of a long string of bad Clinton Pentagon appointments: Les Aspin, William Cohen, John Dalton, Sheila Widnall and Togo West — none of whom could lead a frog to a puddle on a hot day.

Jones would have clobbered an Air Force already on the mat because of bad senior leadership, an Air Force trying to do too much with too little and weakened by an exodus of good people walking out the front gate.

Jones' former commander, Colonel Thomas A. Dyches, told the panel, "I believe there are serious questions about Daryl Jones' personal integrity." Trust is something Jones doesn't exactly inspire. People who have served with him openly call him a liar.

To pump fresh air into a deeply troubled Air Force it needs a strong leader who can take charge, kick butt and clean house. The extraordinary fine young folks who serve in our Air Force deserve no less. Warner says Jones was unable to even "inspire those who serve under him."

My computer almost burned up with Jones' horror stories:

- An Air Force colonel: "We're in a steep decline both in operational capability and morale. Putting that self-serving nitwit in charge would have put us into the proverbial 'smoking hole.'"

- An Air Force major: "How did he draw four years' flight pay when he wasn't on flight status? If a grunt tried this stunt he'd be making license plates at Leavenworth prison."

- A senior Air Force sergeant: "The USAF is in far worse shape than even you write about. Jones would've made it worse. I served with him. His judgment stinks. He'd probably put Amway products in the BX [Base Exchange] and march us there to buy them."



Col. David Hackworth, (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

It's pathetic that a person with so flawed a character could even be considered for such an important national security assignment. But then, as one colonel said, "Look who nominated him."

And this is the nub of the problem. How could Clinton pick someone so manifestly unqualified for the job? Either Clinton's judgment is fried or he's flat doing his best to set up our military for failure!

On the surface Clinton seems always to defer to our military; he visits the troops often, wears military gear and talks a caring game. But when it comes to appointing true-grit leadership that could pull the services out of a six-year nose dive, he constantly comes up with fumbler and losers.

Equally troubling, Clinton remained silent over CNN's false nerve gas charges which dishonored every serving American soldier, past and present.

Loyalty to pals Jane and Ted Turner and CNN president Richard Kaplan won out over loyalty to the troops.

I suspect Clinton, who wrote he "loathed" our military in 1969, wants it to fail, whether consciously or unconsciously. And that he's managed to accomplish! When he took over as commander in chief in 1992 our forces were Desert Storm-strong. Now they're a thin shell of that once-mighty war machine, sputtering and barely fit to fight.

Strong secretaries would never have allowed this to happen. Can you imagine the two-fisted former Secretary of the Navy, James Webb, who resigned in protest because Ronald Reagan cut his fleet, saying this about Jones? "He is a man of proven ability who understands the challenges of public service."

But weak Clinton clones never groan. And Republican Secretary of Defense Cohen said just that! Clinton and Cohen are the two guys ultimately responsible for the security of America.

Sadly, never have our defenses been so badly undercut from within.

[Http://www.hackworth.com](http://www.hackworth.com) is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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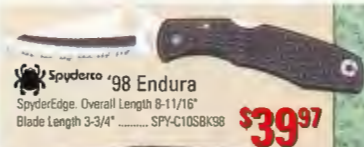
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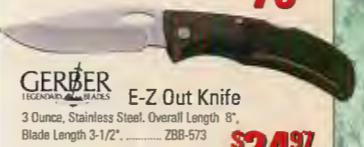
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